

# Tom's Garden

## Blog September 2020

### Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

This year there are large numbers of Eastern Swallowtail butterflies. All butterflies like warm days with plenty of sunshine and swallowtails are no exception. The Eastern swallowtail is native to eastern North America. It is one of the most familiar and abundant butterflies here in Ohio. It produces two broods here and three in southern states. Adults feed on the nectar of pea flowers, bean flowers, sunflowers and butterfly bush. Purple butterfly bush is one of the best plants for attracting swallowtails and other butterflies. It's a good idea to keep the bush deadheaded so there are continuous blooms. Zinnias with their "landing pad" and sunflowers are also excellent choices.



Swallowtails have a wingspan of from 3 to almost 6 inches. The male is yellow with four black "tiger stripes" at the top of each wing. Females may be yellow or black and can be confused with the black swallowtail.

The female has a band of blue spots along the hindwing, whether they have yellow or black wings.



The tiny green eggs are laid singly on the host plants of the caterpillars. Host plants for the larva are wild black cherry, ash, cottonwood, lilac and tulip poplar. Host plants for the black swallowtail larva are fennel, carrot dill and Queen Anne's lace.

Young caterpillars are green and white, older ones are green, black and yellow, reaching a length of two inches.

#### Life Cycle

\*Egg- It takes three to five days for eggs to hatch.

\*Larva- The caterpillar has five instars, growing larger each time.

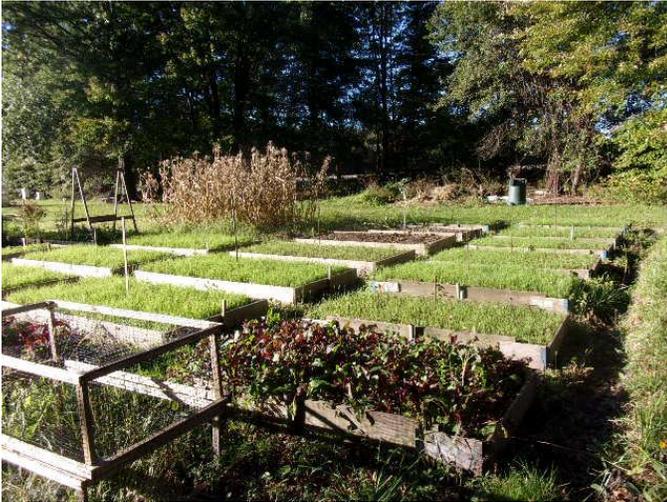
\*Pupa- The chrysalis stage lasts nine to eleven days, or over winter hibernation. They are commonly found on tree trunks, fence posts and in ground litter and leaf piles. Look hard because they are difficult to spot. This is a good reason to have a place on the corner of your lot that is not completely cleaned up over winter. Many different larva will use this area to overwinter.

The Eastern tiger swallowtail is the state butterfly of Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, And North and South Carolinas.

**Papilio glaucus==Eastern Tiger Swallowtail**

## Use of Cover Crops

Planting a cover crop is an inexpensive soil improvement method that should not be underestimated. Green manures or cover crops such as annual rye are planted in the garden in fall for turning over in spring. For best results, sow seed shortly before the first killing frost. In the fall garden, plant cover crops between the rows and any cleared areas. Cover cropping gives additional organic matter, holds nutrients in that might get lost over the winter, and helps reduce erosion and topsoil loss.



Legume crops, like red clover, or hairy vetch can increase nitrogen and reduce the use of fertilizers. Turn over green manures at least two weeks before planting vegetables or flowers. Don't allow cover crops to go to seed.

Adding manures, cover crops, compost and other organic materials can raise the quality of the soil and reduce the need for fertilizer. They also break up compacted and clay soils. Add these things every year for a good soil-building program. Good soil health doesn't happen all at once.

## Tilling

Excessive tilling is harmful to soil health in many ways. Tillage increases oxygen in the soil, stimulating microbe activity, and decomposition of organic matter. Organic matter levels will decline over time and reduce soil health. Tilling also leaves soil more exposed to erosion. Tillage also disrupts the network of soil fungi which leads to their decline over time. Soil-dwelling organisms need living space to contribute to healthy soil. Tillage compacts the subsoil, creating a plow pan that restricts growth of roots and their access to water and nutrients in the subsoil. Excessive foot traffic can compact the surface soil, reducing porosity and impeding root growth. Beneficial insects in the soil are more likely to survive where reduced tillage is used.

## Rotating Crops

Crop rotation will help break up soil-borne pest and disease cycles, improving plant health and help in managing weeds. Pests that thrive within a certain crop are not given a chance to build their populations over time. Rotating crops can also reduce the amount of fertilizer needed.

*Source: Magdoff, F., and H. Van Es. "Building Soils for Better Crops: Sustainable Soil Management", 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Handbook Series, no. 10. USDA Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education Program, 2009.*

## How do I know A Plant is Native to Ohio?

Look in the USDA plant data base:

[HTTPS://PLANT.USDA.GOV/](https://plant.usda.gov/)

“A native plant is a plant that is part of the balance of nature that has developed over hundreds or thousands of years in a particular region or ecosystem.”

*(U.S. Department of Agriculture)*

### **Why is it important to plant natives?**

Native plants are critical for birds and insects, and for all wildlife. Without native plants there would be no insects and eventually no birds. Most seed-eating birds feed their hatchlings insect larva.

Native plants increase the food sources for pollinators. They provide nectar and/or pollen for hummingbirds, native bees, butterflies and moths.

Native plants do not intensely use natural resources. They generally need less water and little or no fertilization.

Native plants provide a natural diversity.

The more native species we plant, the more additional insects and birds we get.

If you belong to a garden club, invite a knowledgeable speaker to help you get started. Get your members the information needed to install a native plant garden or a pollinator garden. Beyond that, think about a community project in your area. There are wonderful native trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges, and vines that should not be overlooked in a native landscape.

### **Queen Anne, The Tatting Queen**

A lot of plant names are related to needlework. Names like pincushion flower and pinks can be linked to sewing accessories, as can Queen Anne’s lace. Making lace by hand is referred to as

“tatting.” Many people today have no idea how lace is made.

In the early 1700s, tatting was very popular. Queen Anne of England reigned from 1702 until her death in 1714. She was well known for her skill at tatting, which was renowned and matched by very few of her subjects.

It is said that she once pricked her finger while tatting and a small drop of blood fell on the lace. If you look closely at the middle of a Queen Anne’s lace blossom, you will often see a purple flower in the center surrounded by lacework. Another explanation of the name is that the purple flower represents the Queen, and the white flowers represent her lace collar.

This weed escaped from Europe and is far more common as a roadside plant than in a garden.



*Photo Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org*

It is a biennial, which means it lives only two years but reseeds with abandon. That’s why it never seems to go away. The plant forms a low growing rosette of foliage the first season, then produces a tall stalk for flower production the second year. The white flowers are produced from June Through September and each plant can put out thousands of seeds.

**Queen Anne’s Lace==Daucus carota  
Wild carrot**

