

spicebush swallowtail *Papilio troilus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Papilionidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The spicebush swallowtail has a wingspan of three and five-eighths to four and seven-eighths inches. Its body is mostly black. The upperside of the hindwing is blue-green (male) or iridescent blue (female) in appearance. The underside of the hindwing has orange spots and a rounded extension from the back edge. The spicebush swallowtail caterpillar is dark green on the back becoming whiter on the sides. This smooth larva has two, large, round black spots with orange or yellow edges near the head followed by four lines of blue spots with black edges. When disturbed, the caterpillar can extend a scent gland that gives off a bad-smelling substance.

BEHAVIORS

The spicebush swallowtail may be found statewide in Illinois. It flies low to the ground and flutters slowly when feeding on flower nectar. The caterpillar feeds on spicebush and sassafras. This insect overwinters in the pupa stage, which is usually attached to vegetation.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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