



Information

Bohart Museum of Entomology

No. 025

Anise Swallowtail Butterfly

Anise Swallowtails, *Papilio zelicaon*, are large ($2\frac{3}{4}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches) handsome butterflies, brilliantly marked with black and yellow patches. They also are known as the Western Parsley Swallowtail. The upper surface of the hind wing has a yellow-orange eyespot near the tail, with a round black center, that is not connected to hind wing margin. These butterflies are common throughout the western United States. They should not be confused with the larger Tiger Swallowtail, which is found in many of the same habitats. The Anise Swallowtail is smaller and the black and yellow markings on the wings are arranged in patches, not in tiger-like stripes.

The very young caterpillars of the Anise Swallowtail are almost completely black, with a pale marking near the head. As they mature the larvae become a bright yellowish green, with alternating black bands and orange spots.

Larvae also have a bright orange horn just behind the head that they protrude when disturbed. This horn, when extended, gives off a strong, pungent odor, which differs in smell depending on what kind of plant the caterpillar is feeding on.

For Anise Swallowtail Butterflies on the west coast, adults typically fly and mate during late spring, from April to June. Females lay eggs singly on wild carrot (*Dacus*), fennel (*Foeniculum*), wild parsley, and other related plants. They also may feed on garden grown parsley or carrot plants. Several females may place numerous eggs on the same plant, so one plant may have a large number of larvae feeding on it. The larvae develop throughout the summer, and the insect will pupate in the late summer and early fall. The pupae will hibernate throughout the winter, and adults emerge the following spring.

