

butterfly adventures



ORCHARD SWALLOWTAIL

Orchard Swallowtail egg

Females lay their eggs under a leaf which acts as an umbrella from the weather and shelter from predators.

Average egg time: 3-7 days



Caterpillars (larva) will eat, eat eat!

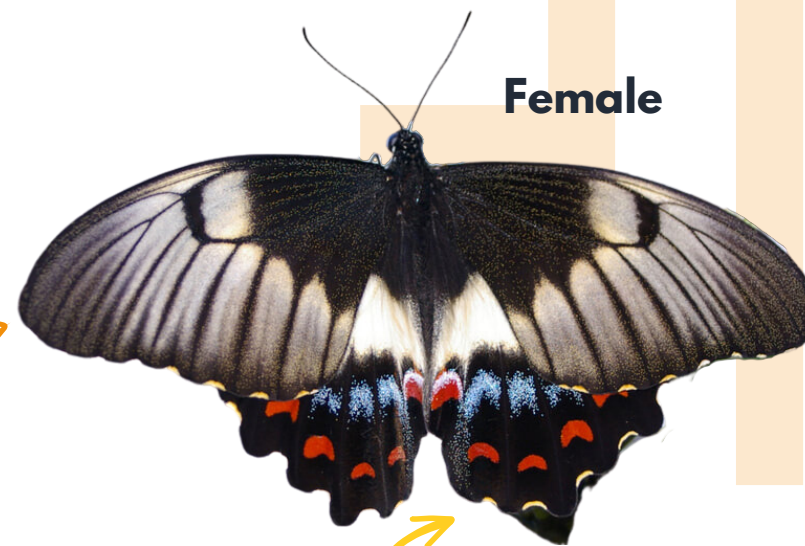
Caterpillars go through 5 growing stages called instars. The early stage caterpillars are designed to look like bird droppings on a leaf with their brown and white colouring. In the last stage they become green and brown and move to sit on branches instead of leaves where they can camouflage as part of the plant.

Average larval time: 4 weeks



When the caterpillar has reached it's final stage and is ready to pupate (become a chrysalis) it is about 6cm long. The caterpillar anchors itself to a branch or leaf with a cremaster and girdle.

A chrysalis is designed to blend into the plant which means it can vary in colour from bright green to grey and dark brown. Easy to mistake as dead but don't worry, it's just camouflaging! Average pupa time: from 3 to 8 weeks. If it gets really cold they can "overwinter" which means they may be a chrysalis for 6 months waiting for spring!



Female

The females have series of blue and red crescent-shaped markings on their hind wings



Male

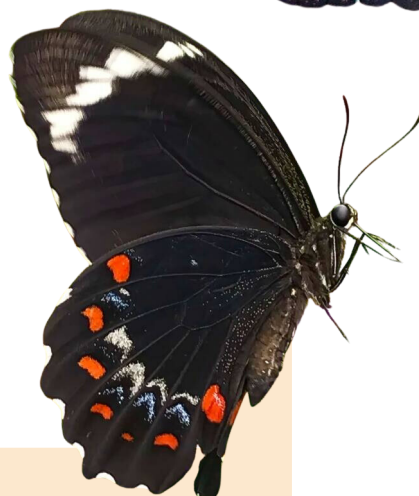
The males are black with an arc of creamy-white spots near the tip of each forewing. Each hindwing has a creamy-white patch and a single red spot.



If disturbed, a caterpillar will reveal a red-orange "tentacle" (known as the osmeterium) from behind its head which emits a foul smell to deter predators

Female

Male



Underwing view of female and male Orchard Swallowtail. Female has large white patches underneath. The male has a line of red crescent-shaped markings.