My orchard Swallowtail butterfly hasn't emerged from it's chrysalis yet...

Orchard swallowtail butterflies don't like the cold weather. We've had an unexpected cold snap lately.

Your butterfly has likely decided to overwinter and wait until spring.

What is overwintering?
Overwintering is similar to hibernation. With butterflies it's called diapause. It's how they survive the winter months and is triggered by the shorter daylight hours and colder temperatures.

How do I look after an overwintering chrysalis?
If your chrysalis has decided to overwinter then you will need to keep it cold and away from artificial light (natural light helps it tell time). The laundry, the shed or a cupboard in a cooler part of the house is usually good.

How do I look after an overwintering chrysalis?
Your chrysalis will need to keep hydrated. Continue to mist your chrysalis about once a week if kept indoors. Our homes are often dry from the use of heaters. Outside in a shed is usually fine. Ensure you regularly check on the chrysalis.

How do I tell if my chrysalis is dead or in diapause?
This can be challenging even for experts! If it dies the chrysalis may become brittle and even disintegrate. Another method is testing the abdominal area. With very gentle pressure try bending/flexing the abdomen, it should move back into place. If it stays bent it has likely died.

When will my butterfly come out of diapause and emerge?
This depends on location, temperatures and amount of daylight. Some will come out at the start of spring, while others will come out mid-summer.
When the days are consistently warmer you can bring your chrysalis out into the warmth and sun to start heating it back up.

But one of mine emerged shortly after I received it and the other one hasn't?
This is perfectly normal! Just like we have preferences and thresholds when it comes to weather, butterflies do too. Some will feel more ready to come out when it's a little cooler and others want a scorcher!