

Soaring into May

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Although regrets of the last year's lost opportunities still linger, a new season has brought a second chance to get it right. The Heath is done blooming at last, and in its place a multitude of other flowers have burst into bloom. None are exceptional insect magnets, so for now I wander randomly around the garden looking for any action I can find. Many of the butterflies pass through the yard all too quickly, presumably in search of host plants that aren't there. Nevertheless, there have been some surprises and lucky meetings.

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May, 2011



Caught in the act! I've seen this critter twice over the last few days, but caught it drinking out of our island planter while I happened to have the camera with me. Then it came even closer as I stood still. As it turned out, I was standing only a few feet from its burrow.



This species of angle-winged butterflies, a Comma, was driving me crazy. I'd seen several passing through the yard in the last week, but so quickly I couldn't get photos or even identify them.

However, this one was more than cooperative, sitting still while I took a series of photos as I gradually inched closer. The last photo was the best. One of the host plants is the Elm.



This may be a female Sooty Azure, a new species recently spun off from the Spring Azure, though its range is given as Western Pennsylvania and Ohio. Despite the name, it may appear neither sooty nor azure. However, a hint of blue was visible while it was in flight. Blueberries are a possible host plant. So far, I've seen two of these.



This is unquestionably an Eastern Tailed Blue, attracted to the tiny yellow flowers of a leguminous lawn weed. This species can be seen through most of the season although it is very small and easy to overlook. The caterpillars also feed on legumes including clover which is a good reason not to use weed killer.



One of this year's seemingly omnipresent Silver-spotted Skippers feeds at an Allium flower. Another one has already claimed our new vegetable garden for itself.



Small folded wing skippers are often difficult to identify. These are both Tawny-edged Skippers. The one on the left is holding its wings in an atypical position and looks quite different from the one on the right. Dandelions are good for something, at least.



This is a Yellowpatch Skipper. Like the Tawny-edged Skipper on the previous page, the host plants for its caterpillars are grasses.



A non-native European Paper Wasp practices global domination on a peony bud.



This is a native Northern Paper Wasp which regularly builds exposed papery nests around our garage door. On the other hand, the European Paper Wasp prefers enclosed areas for its nests.