

Soaring Brilliantly

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*An eater of greens, plump and plain,
falls deep asleep in pouch contained.
When it awakes, earth-bound no more,
it feeds on nectar, free to soar.*

During the last 20 years, the variety of plants in our yard has increased and we've allowed some wild areas to develop. The number and variety of butterflies and other animals has increased accordingly.

Some of the earliest plants we put in were Butterfly Bushes. The original plants are still there and they've had many offspring. I always paid attention to the butterflies that visited them. We've had some unusual ones over the years like Snout Butterflies from the Midwest and a Giant Swallowtail from the deep South.

Last summer I started photographing them on a regular basis, and soon discovered how much individual variation there was within each species. This book includes my best photographs.

This year, I'm looking forward to capturing the photos I missed last year.

Eric Neubauer
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Our most common variety has been the Silver-spotted Skipper. The light spot on the hind wing appears bright silver and really stands out. Incidentally, skippers are not considered true butterflies, but, unlike moths, they are usually included in butterfly guides.

Skippers defend a small territory and buzz any intruder including people. Be alert to catch this deliberate response.



Common name: Silver-spotted Skipper
Latin name: *Epargyreus clarus*
Host plants: wisteria, beans, beggar's tick



Silver-spotted Skippers tend to close their wings when resting. Getting a good upper view of the fore wing turned out a lot harder than expected.



Common name: Hummingbird Moth
Latin name: *Hemaris thysbe*
Host plants: honeysuckle family



Hummingbird Moths were very plentiful last summer, probably because of several honeysuckle vines we planted recently. They are active in bright sunlight unlike most moths including the similar but much larger sphinx moths, .



Hummingbird Moths can have very colorful with black, yellow, green, orange, and red markings. The black and yellow are most prominent on many individuals.



This small, unidentified moth was a unique visitor. At least, I think it's a moth.



Common name: Common Checkered Skipper
Latin name: *Pyrgus communis*
Host plants: mallows (includes hibiscus)



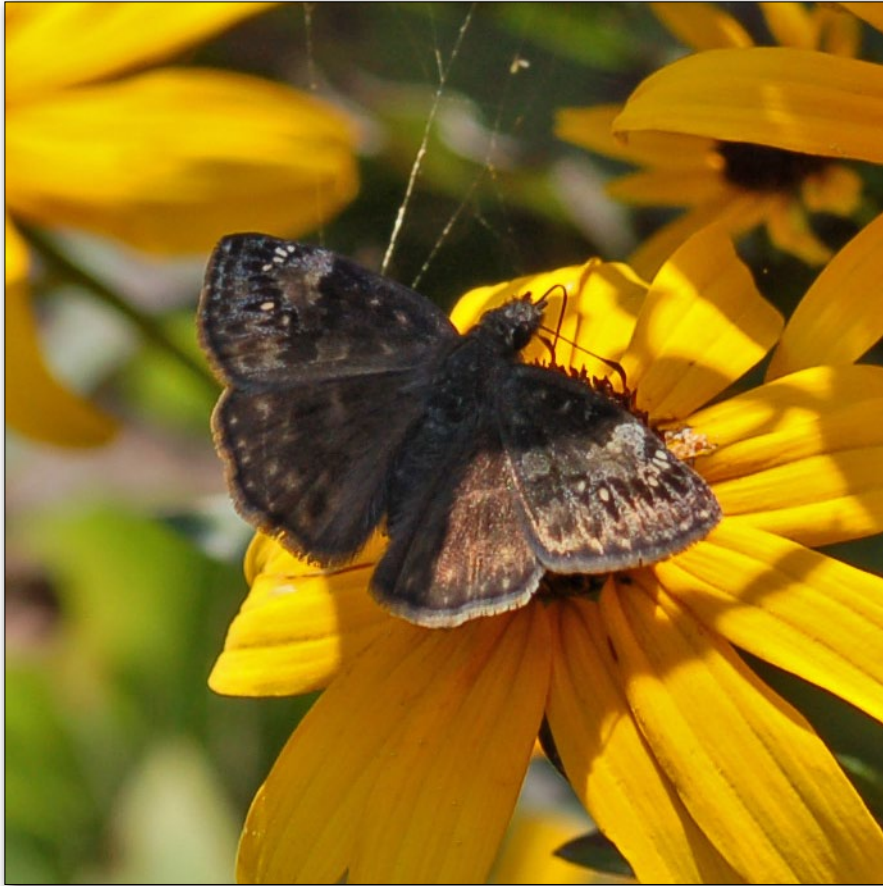
Common Checkered Skippers are rather variable. They often have blue hairy scaling on and near the body. Here's a good reason for growing a Rose of Sharon.



Common name: Horace's Duskywing
Latin name: *Erynnis horatius*
Host plants: oaks



Many duskywings have some small clear spots near the tips of the fore wings. The various species are hard to tell apart, so my identifications are tentative.



Common name: Juvenal's Duskywing
Latin name: *Erynnis juvenalis*
Host plants: oaks



Common name: Wild Indigo Duskywing
Latin name: *Erynnis batisiae*
Host plants: wild indigo



Common name: Two-spotted Skipper
Latin name: *Euphyes bimacula*
Host plants: sedges



Common name: Yellow Patch Skipper
Latin name: *Polites coras*
Host plants: grasses



Common name: Monarch
Latin name: *Danaus plexippus*
Host plants: milkweeds



The Monarch is probably the best known butterfly. The one on the left is a male identified by the swelling in the middle of one hind wing vein. Once we were visited by a Viceroy Butterfly, the well known but rarely seen mimic of the Monarch.



Common name: Red Admiral
Latin name: *Vanessa atalanta*
Host plants: nettles and false nettles



I never realized these had a small blue patch on the top of the hind wing before I photographed one. There's also a little blue on the underside of the fore wing.



Common name: Painted Lady
Latin name: *Vanessa cardui*
Host plants: thistle, aster, mallow



I failed to get a good photo of the upper wings which gives me something to do this coming summer.

These two individuals are different. Most notably, the one on the right has two turquoise and black spots between the two large spots on the hind wing. The small spots are completely missing on the other butterfly.



The color of this tiny moth was a startling. We only saw one and it remains unidentified. Snout moth *Pyrausta volupialis* is similar except for having continuous bands and a much darker eye. This one does not match any other *Pyrausta* species I found on the internet, but the genus is certainly correct. The larvae are apparently all corn borers.



Common name: Great Spangled Fritillary
Latin name: *Speyeria cybele*
Host plants: violets

I took most of my photos after mid summer, when the single annual brood of these fritillaries had been out a while. Because of this, I was only able to get a good photo of a rather worn one.



Common name: Meadow Fritillary
Latin name: *Clossiana bellona*
Host plants: violets



A smaller fritillary we've seen more often lately, possibly as a result of several large violet patches.



Common name: Variegated Fritillary
Latin name: *Euptoieta claudia*
Host plants: violets and pansies



The individual above is a bit worn. The colors are more vivid on fresh specimens.



Common name: Pearly Crescentspot
Latin name: *Phyciodes tharos*
Host plants: asters



A small butterfly with a long name that I thought was more simply called a Pearl Crescent for years because that was what I was told. They are quite numerous at times. A light crescent shape appears on the underside of the hind wing near the edge.



Common name: Tiger Swallowtail
Latin name: *Pterourus glaucus*
Host plants: many including willows and cottonwoods



This is a female. Females have a large amount of blue on the hind wings. Males have little or no blue there.



The Tiger Swallowtail has a dark phase form, but this appears to be something else: a melanistic variation of the normal phase. This appears to be a female.



Common name: Spicebush Swallowtail
Latin name: *Pterourus troilus*
Host plants: spicebush, sassafras, bays



After seeing the host plants, our yard clearly needs a spicebush and possibly a sassafras, too.
We planted a pipevine two years ago and hope to finally see a Pipevine Swallowtail in the flesh one of these days.

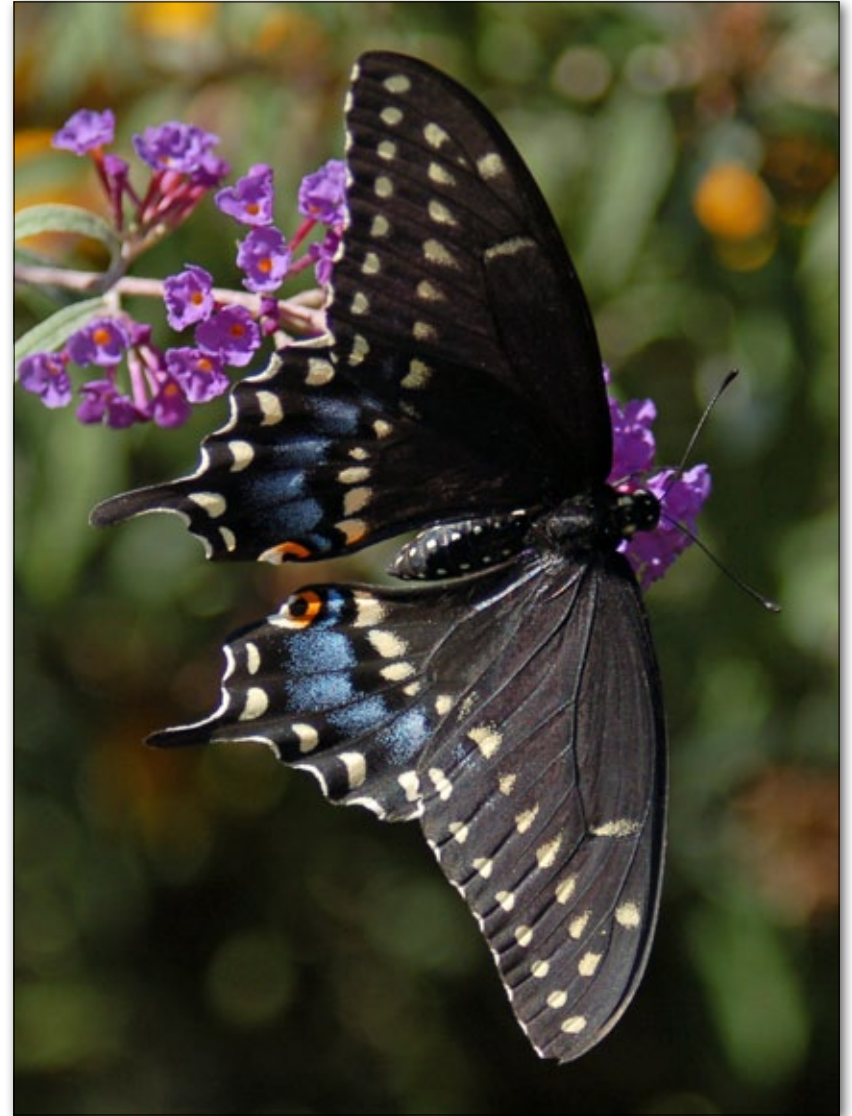


Common name: Eastern Black Swallowtail

Latin name: *Papilio polyxenes*

Host plants: Queen Ann's lace, other carrot relatives, rue

At times this is our most common swallowtail. It is smaller than the other two and has more variable markings.





Common name: Eastern Tailed Blue
Latin name: *Everes comyntas*
Host plants: legumes, especially clover



These small butterflies usually rest with their wings closed, so the only way they truly live up to the color in their name is in giving an impression of blue while in flight.

Yes, we have clover and lots of other things in our lawn since we don't use weed killer.



Common name: Cabbage White
Latin name: *Artogeia rapae*
Host plants: crucifers including cabbage, nasturtiums

The Cabbage White is one of those irrepressible non-native species. Nevertheless, it looks quite pretty on our verbena.