

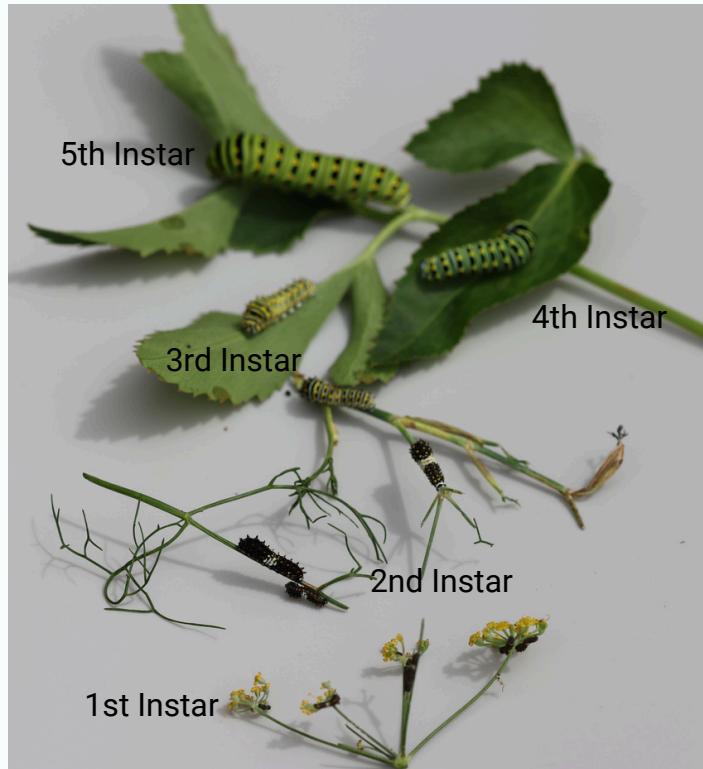
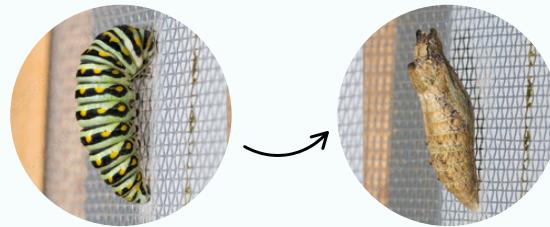


Caterpillar Development

- Caterpillars will eat and grow through 5 instars before they reach roughly 1 inch in length and pupate.
- Between each instar, they will stop eating, attach themselves to a surface, go still, and molt. Typically, they eat their shed skin but leave their old head capsule.
- You can tell if a caterpillar is about to molt by gently tapping their little back end. If they refuse to pick up those back feet, let them be!
- You can transfer caterpillars to a mesh pop-up cage around the third instar stage (about half an inch long). You'll need to empty frass from their container and use a clean paper towel to wipe away any residue. Do not use any cleaners or disinfecting wipes! These could kill the caterpillar.

Pupation

When caterpillars are ready to pupate, they will attach themselves to the top or side of their enclosure, firmly planting their very back feet to the surface. They will stay that way for a day or so while attaching themselves to the surface they're on with a "belt" around their sides. They'll curl their head down and let go of the surface, supported by the "belt" they created. It's important not to touch them during this time. They will eventually molt again, revealing their pupal form.



Nearing Eclosure

The pupal stage lasts for 10-20 days, or longer if overwintering

The pupa will become translucent or very dark when it's close to eclosing (emerging from the chrysalis). Watch for the yellow and white wing spots.



Black Swallowtail chrysalides can be green or brown. A brown chrysalis is more likely when they are going to overwinter as a pupa.

Swallowtails have been recorded to overwinter for up to two years, so if they do not eclose by the following Spring, they still may eclose by the next Spring. If the pupa stops moving in response to touch, feels lighter/hollow, or becomes hardened to the point it cannot move, the pupa is likely dead.