Black Swallowtail Caterpillar

**Known disguises:** Resembles bird droppings when young. Osmeterium extruded from caterpillars’ head help disguise the caterpillar as a snake.

**Known food preferences:** Parsley family members including native plants like Golden Zizia, also commonly known as golden Alexanders (Zizia aurea) and Spotted Water Hemlock (Cicuta maculata), but will also eat common garden herbs like parsley, dill, fennel, and even the non-native Queen Anne’s Lace.

**Special weaponry:** When startled, caterpilars raise their fleshy orange-forked osmeterium which resembles a snake’s tongue. It emits a strong foul odor to frighten potential adversaries including birds, other insects.
Winter hide-out: 
Spends the winter as a chrysalis that blends with the surface to which it is attached. Held tightly with silk, the chrysalis usually forms on a plant species other than the caterpillar food plant. Be sure to protect these beauties and other critters in your winter garden by leaving your spent herbaceous plants standing, if possible.

If capture is avoided: 
Black Swallowtails will emerge and are in flight in Florida all year and April through September northward in the East. Far less commonly seen in western states, flight times are February through October.