

# Western Tiger Swallowtail on Snow Plant

Photo by Gordon Cook

Over Memorial Day weekend, I was foraging for morels with my dad up in the Sierra. Snow Plants (*Sarcodes sanguinea*) are an indicator that the soil is warm enough for the mushrooms to pop, so we always look for them. I was walking down to the American River when I saw this [Western tiger] Swallowtail butterfly. It was licking the Snow Plant to get nectar and was not bothered by my presence.

*Sarcodes sanguinea* is a parasitic plant belonging to the Monotropaceae, or Indianpipe family, that has no chlorophyll and derives sustenance and nutrients from mycorrhizal fungi that attach to tree roots.

