



Swallowtail Surprise!

After three long years, our *Aristolochia californica*, Dutchman's Pipevine has matured and is taking off. Today, I finally observed Pipeline Swallowtail caterpillars on the plant. Of course, I screamed with excitement when I saw this. The first time I have observed an insect on a host plant. The plant was purchased at Sac Valley CNPS Nursery.

Sherrill Neidich, June 2025

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While Dutchman's Pipevine *Aristolochia californica* stands out for its unusually shaped and short-lived flowers, it is probably most noted for its significance as a host plant for the pipevine swallowtail butterfly (*Battus philenor*). It is the only native food source for caterpillars of this species. The pipevine swallowtail butterfly has black wings with blue markings and a wingspan of two-and-a-half to four inches. Similarly to the Monarch/Milkweed relationship, Dutchman's pipe is poisonous to vertebrates, and so adult pipevine butterflies are poisonous to birds and other predators.