

Weekly Update August 27th – Sept 3rd 2015

1. Butterfly life cycles vary but generally two months is the duration of sexual activity of the species. Individuals may live only about a week. Eggs are laid on host plants and a new generation starts. Except, some species ‘hibernate’ - a phase called diapause.

2.

In southwestern B.C. a 4” black and yellow butterfly may be a **swallowtail**. See Ingrid Hoff *Celebrate Swallowtails in Gardens West* V.62 :2 March 2012.

Another large yellow and black butterfly in B.C . is the **Viceroy**.

A small yellow butterfly fluttering around a wet puddle may be a **sulphur**.

Although butterfly feed on nectar, the host plants for egg laying vary with species. The **sulphur** larvae eat weedy legumes like vetch, clover and black medick. **Crescent** butterflies lay eggs on asters. **Monarchs** rely on milkweed. **West coast ladies** look for stinging nettle or garden hollyhocks to feed their larvae. The **red admiral** will lay eggs on stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*). Swallowtail caterpillars will feed on willow, poplar, Saskatoon, ash and crab apple so they are probably not endangered. What species does a **Gossamer winged** butterfly rely on? I want to plant some of whatever it is.

For a field guide see Acorn and Sheldon *Butterflies of British Columbia* Lone Pine 2001. For a wonderful monograph look at *Butterflies of British Columbia* by Guppy and Shepard published by UBC Press for the Royal B.C. Museum in 2006. There are photographs, distribution maps, charts of monthly occurrences and identification aids for caterpillars. Both are in the VBGA library collection.