



Utah Bug Club

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Raising Caterpillars of the Baird's Swallowtail Butterfly:



1. Baird's Swallowtail is an attractive butterfly that flies in isolated colonies in Utah. It has a black and yellow form. Caterpillars of this butterfly feed on an aster that grows uncommonly in the Wasatch called Tarragon Sage (*Artemisia dracunculus*). The closest known location of this plant to Kaysville is Centerville Canyon—due east of 100 South in Centerville to the mountain. Finding suitable plant for this butterfly can be accomplished from either of two options. The first option requires some hiking. This plant grows in the mountains behind Centerville. This takes about a 45 minute commitment; once a week; since plant cuttings will need to be replaced weekly for roughly four weeks. An alternative to using Tarragon Sage is to buy potted fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) from a local nursery. (See #3)



Caterpillar hostplant Tarragon Sage growing in the wild.



Baird's Swallowtail last instar larva on natural hostplant Tarragon Sage.



Baird's Swallowtail third instar larva on natural hostplant Tarragon Sage.

2. Take cuttings of plant and place in bottled water. Replace old plant with fresh plant every 5-7 days. Replace caterpillar by cutting the leaf it is on with a pair of scissors and place onto fresh plant. Keep bottled plant away from direct sunlight. The caterpillar will go through a series of five molts called instars. As it gets older, it will stop looking like a dark larva with a white saddle, and be greenish with yellow dots and black stripes. After it has been a very large larva for 7 days, it will purge undigested food (kinda gross) before it wanders off the plant, **walking with great haste** seeking a place to make a chrysalis. You can provide this place by placing the wandering larva in a lunch sack and securing with paper clips. The larva will pupate and make a chrysalis about 4-5 days later.

3. If you choose to raise this caterpillar with potted fennel or dill, you can purchase this plant at J&J Nursery in Layton; located on 1815 W. Gentile Street for \$1.49 for a 3" pot. If you choose this option, make sure that they have not sprayed their plants with insecticide.

4. Once your caterpillar forms a pupa, it should emerge into an adult butterfly within 10-14 days. Do not expose your pupa to direct sunlight. Use the same container to fasten the pupa and emerge the adult as you use for the checkered white butterfly.



Squat tub container with paper towel fastened to lid and side. Tape chrysalis in container. Adult should emerge in 1-2 weeks.



Baird's Swallowtail chrysalis.