

TREE PEST OF THE MARIANAS

Adult butterfly



Photo by Donald Nafus

Green phase of caterpillar



Common Name: Black Citrus Swallowtail

Scientific Name: *Papilio polytes* L. (Lepidoptera: Papilionidae)

Biology: The butterfly lays a single round, green-colored eggs on the new growth of the citrus plant. Eggs hatch in few days into caterpillars which resemble bird droppings. The caterpillars eat the new leaves. Older caterpillars are green with prominent eyespots on humped area near head. Disturbed larvae extend red tentacles and produce a lemony odor. Larval development usually takes less than 30 days. Larvae pupate on the plant and produce a green or brown pupa. The pupal stage lasts about 2 weeks. Adults are black with white spots on wings and a distinctive tail on hind wings. Adults feed on nectar.

Crops Affected: Lemon, lime, tangerine, and other citrus

Distribution: Present in Micronesia including the Marianas and SE Asia. Tropical.

Damage: Larvae consume new growth of citrus. Young trees may be defoliated.

Control: On small trees hand removal of eggs or larvae is recommended. Malathion applied to the drip point will control caterpillars on older trees. Two tiny wasps, *Trichrogramma* sp. and *Pteromalus luzonensis* attack and kill the young stages of the swallowtail. *P. luzonensis* is present throughout the Marianas. This wasp feeds inside the pupa. It comes out through a tiny hole cut through the pupal case. The *Trichrogramma* wasp is very small and feeds inside the eggs of the butterfly. Eggs attacked by the wasp are black in color and should be left on the plant.

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