

GENERAL NOTES

PAPILIO TROILUS L. ON A NEW AND RARE LARVAL FOOD PLANT

Additional key words: Papilionidae, endangered, *Lindera melissifolia*.

Papilio troilus L. is a common swallowtail found over a broad geographic range. It is known from southern Canada to Florida and W to Manitoba and Texas, becoming less common W of the Mississippi River (Klots, A. B. 1951, Field guide to the butterflies, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 349 pp.). At least 15 species have been reported as larval food plants; these are mainly in the families Lauraceae, Rosaceae, and Rutaceae (Teitz, H. M. 1972, An index to the described life histories, early stages, and hosts of Macrolepidoptera of the continental United States and Canada, Allyn Mus. Entomol., Sarasota, Florida, 1041 pp.; Opler, P. A. & G. O. Krizek 1984, Butterflies east of the Great Plains, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore, 294 pp.). Species for which there is direct evidence of complete larval development are *Cinnamomum camphora* Nees & Eberm., *Lindera benzoin* (L.) Blume, *Persea borbonia* (L.) Spreng., and *Sassafras albidum* (Nutt.) Nees (R. C. Lederhouse pers. comm.).

In Mississippi, *Lindera benzoin* is the most common and widely distributed spicebush. The related pondberry or swamp spicebush, *L. melissifolia* (Walter) Blume, is an endangered species throughout its range in the SE United States (Kral, R. 1983, U.S. Dep. Agr. Forest Service Tech. Publ. R8-TP2, 1305 pp.; Currie, R. 1985, Federal Register 50: 32581-32585). Pondberry is known in Mississippi only from the Delta Region in Bolivar, Sharkey, and Sunflower counties.

On 18 June 1988, when the latest Mississippi population of *L. melissifolia* was discovered in Sunflower Co., a larva of *Papilio troilus* was noticed in its weblike, longitudinally rolled nest on a leaf of *L. melissifolia*. The preserved larva was given to the Mississippi Entomological Museum at Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi, and voucher specimens of *L. melissifolia* are deposited in university herbaria at Florida, Michigan, Vanderbilt, and other herbaria.

In Mississippi, *Papilio troilus* larvae are commonly found on *Sassafras albidum* and *Lindera benzoin*, both in Lauraceae. *Sassafras albidum* is common in the Delta Region of Mississippi, but *Lindera benzoin* is relatively rare there, being more frequent eastward in the Loess Bluff Region. It is therefore logical that *P. troilus* utilizes another species in this family and in the genus *Lindera*. This observation is unique because a common butterfly seems to accept a rare food plant in the natural environment when other sources are much more common. However, no individuals of sassafras were located in the immediate area, and populations of the more common spicebush are kilometers away from the collection site.

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SPENCER COLLECTION GIVEN TO SMITHSONIAN

The National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution) has received the Spencer Collection of Western Butterflies. The Collection consists of over 4000 specimens, primarily of the genus *Speyeria*, and represents eight western states, Mexico, and Canada.