

Congratulations Michigan Garden Club Members! Senate Bill 298 proposing the Black Swallowtail Butterfly (*Papilio Polyxenes*) as the official State of Michigan butterfly was introduced in the Michigan Senate on April 18, 2017, by Senators:

- Curtis Hertel Jr. : (primary) 23rd District (Lansing)
- Coleman Young II: 1st District (Detroit)
- John Proos: 21st District (St Joseph)
- Steven M. Bieda: 9th District (Warren)
- Jim Stamas: 36th District (Gaylord)
- Rebekah Warren: 18th District (Ann Arbor)
- Ian Conyers: 4th District (Lincoln Park)

Currently, SB 298 has been assigned to the Government Operations Committee for action. The members of this Committee are:

- Arlan Meekhof: Committee Chair, 30th District (Grand Haven)
- Geoff Hansen: Vice Chair, 34th District (Hart)
- Mike Kowall: 15th District (White Lake)
- Jim Ananich: Minority Vice Chair, 27th District (Flint)
- Morris W. Hood III 3rd District (Detroit)

If you are represented by one of these senators, please write to your senator and ask him to support SB 298 by referring it to the full senate for a vote!

We need the help of every Michigan Garden Club member and every supporter they can find to get this bill passed! What can you do? Please, please, please, write to your senator and ask him or her to support SB 298. Attached is a form letter that you can adapt to send to your senator. You can mail it or you can e-mail it. If you don't know who your senator is you can go to this website:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/FindYourSenator/michiganfys.asp?lookup=Y>

and enter your address and it will tell you who your senator is. You can use the same address on the model letter for all state senators.

The 2016 version of this bill was never taken up by the Government Operations Committee. Several previous butterfly bills have also died in Committee. We don't want that to happen to SB 298. The Government Operations Committee will need our incentive to take action on this bill. You may offer that incentive by writing, calling, emailing or visiting your state senator.

Do you have stakeholders in your community who would also support SB 298 making the Black Swallowtail the official State of Michigan Butterfly? Please contact them and ask them to join you in writing to your State Senator.

Do you work with school groups in educating them about butterflies? Under the "Projects Tab" on the Michigan Garden Clubs website you'll find a link to educational resources. There you'll

find a fabulous curriculum for use with schools along with a beautiful brochure on the Black Swallowtail developed by our Birds, Bees and Butterflies Committee. We also include the National Garden Clubs booklet on Butterflies for use with schools and communities

The Winter 2015-16 issue of Thru the Garden Gate reported that the Birds, Bees, and Butterflies Committee completed extensive research on Michigan butterflies before recommending the Black Swallowtail (*Papilio Polyxenes*) as the official State of Michigan butterfly. Their recommendation was based on the following:

- The Black Swallowtail is a full time Michigan resident. Most butterflies are part time Michigan residents but the Black Swallowtail overwinters as a pupa in Michigan— making it a full time resident and an excellent choice for school groups to study.
- The Black Swallowtail is fairly large—3-4 inches in diameter making it easy to be seen.
- Some butterflies reside in very tall trees. The Black Swallowtail prefers flowering areas and natural areas filled with red clover, common milkweed, butterfly weed etc.
- Each Black Swallowtail lives 2+ weeks with 2-3 generations per year. The Black Swallowtail can be found throughout the State of Michigan.
- Butterflies are pollinators—key partners in Michigan’s agricultural and tourist industries.
- 47 of the 50 states have an official state butterfly, state insect, or both. Michigan does not. We think Michigan should join those states that celebrate the presence and value of butterflies.

Please monitor the Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc., website for updates. You’ll find the information under the “Projects” tab : Black Swallowtail.