

CITRUS PEST SPOTLIGHT

Fig. 1 (right). Adult orange-dog swallow-tail butterfly



Fig. 2 (far right) Mature orange-dog larvae with osmetrium exposed following disturbance



Orange-dog

By Michael E. Rogers

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Papilio cresphontes (Cramer)
(Lepidoptera: Papilionidae)

IDENTIFICATION

Adults of this swallow-tail butterfly

are black with yellow markings and have a wingspan measuring approximately 5 inches (Fig. 1). Eggs are small (3 mm), round in shape, light-orange in color and are laid on young leaves. Each female is capable of lay-

ing up to 500 eggs over the course of her lifespan. Larvae (caterpillars) are light-brown in color and grow from 5 mm to more than 2 inches in length as they molt from one larval stage to the next. The mature larvae resemble a bird dropping when motionless on a tree branch or leaf. When disturbed, the larvae will rear its head backward and extrude an osmetrium (an orange-forked structure) from behind the head that releases a noxious chemical to deter predators (Fig. 2).

DAMAGE

Adults feed on nectar of flowering plants and thus do not cause damage to citrus. The larvae are the damaging stage and feed only on citrus leaves. Damage caused by the feeding of orange-dog larvae is only a concern for young trees, as considerable leaf loss on young trees can occur.

MANAGEMENT

Orange-dogs overwinter as pupae on the branches of citrus trees or in surrounding landscapes. Adult butterfly emergence coincides with warmer weather and will move into citrus groves to lay eggs when new flush is present. Populations typically remain low, but can occasionally reach levels that cause significant damage to young trees in late summer or early fall. In such cases, chemical control of orange-dog larvae is possible only if sprays are made when the larvae are still small; larger larvae are more difficult to control with insecticide sprays. Additional information on control of orange-dog can be found in the 2012 Florida Citrus Pest Management Guide.

Michael E. Rogers is an associate professor of entomology at the University of Florida-IFAS' Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred.

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