

Great Spangled Fritillary

Speyeria cybele

-It's big ("great"), it's flashy with silver spots beneath its wings, ("spangled"), and it's dotted like a pair of dice ("fritillary," from the Latin, *frittillus*), but to most backyard butterfly enthusiasts, this species is simply the big, flashy, orange and black butterfly that adds some spice to the garden whenever it deigns to visit.

-Females are paler than the males, leaning toward a pale gold rather than pumpkin orange. Like other fritillaries, many of which are confusingly similar in color though not as big as this 3-inch behemoth, the Great Spangled Fritillary is a fast flier, never pausing long in one place. You can tell that autumn is on its way when the Great Spangled Fritillary starts flocking to gardens and patches of wildflowers. Although you may see an occasional specimen throughout the season, the late-summer hatch increases their numbers just in time for peak bloom of the prairie flowers that they like best.



Wingspan:

2 1/8 to 3 inches

Caterpillar hosts:

Violets are the only item on the menu for the caterpillars of the Great Spangled Fritillary.

Adult food:

The Great Spangled Fritillary adult feeds on Milkweeds, Thistles, Ironweed, Dogbane, Wild Bergamot, Joe Pye Weed, Pale Purple Coneflower, and Purple Coneflower.