

Pearly Crescent-spot

Phyciodes tharos

-A small golden orange-and-black butterfly, this species is one of our most “frequent fliers,” ranging across the continent and abundant just about everywhere. Look carefully when the butterfly pauses with its wings closed and erect, and you’ll spot the pale crescent near the edge of its hind-wings. This perky butterfly often flies fairly low, visiting one patch of flowers after another, but it also rises to greater heights to seek a perch. There it sits for long stretches of time, wings outspread but ready to dart into the air after any passerby. These encounters don’t always have a happy ending. Sometimes, this species will pick a fight with a passing bird, which instantly switched to pursuer and snatched the butterfly in midair.



Wingspan: 1 ¼ to 1 ¾ inches

Caterpillar hosts: Several species of smooth-leaved true asters will host the caterpillars of the Pearly Crescent-spot. Plant some Smooth Aster, New England Aster, and Swamp Aster for these butterfly caterpillars.

Adult food: Nectar from a great variety of flowers including dogbane, swamp milkweed, Asters, Pale Purple Coneflower, Purple Coneflower, Goldenrods, and Ironweed will feed the adult Pearly Crescent-spot.