

# *support the regal fritillary* AS IOWA'S OFFICIAL STATE BUTTERFLY

## WHY THE REGAL FRITILLARY?

After reviewing all species found in the state the regal fritillary (*Speyria idalia*) rose to the top because it is:

- native to Iowa and found statewide
- a large identifiable species
- common to prairie which is Iowa's native biome
- listed as a species of concern in Iowa
- and has a unique and educational life cycle



Photo by Richard Stilwell



Photo by Doug Taron

## Life cycle

In the fall females lay eggs in the tallgrass prairie near their host plants, which are various types of violets. The violets have already died back for winter and must be found via a chemical compound left by the violets. Eggs hatch in late fall. First instar caterpillars eat the remains of their eggs and nothing else until spring. In early spring caterpillars eat the violet leaves and go through 6 instars, not the normal 5 like other butterflies. The caterpillars molt forming

their pupae where they'll stay for 15 days. Adults emerge in early summer. After mating, females go into summer dormancy until fall and then lay their eggs.

## HOW CAN I HELP?

Contact your local legislatures and encourage them to support the regal fritillary as Iowa's official state butterfly.

[www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators](http://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators)

For additional information contact Nathan Brockman, Reiman Gardens' Christina Reiman Butterfly Wing Curator at [mantisnb@iastate.edu](mailto:mantisnb@iastate.edu) or 515-294-2567.



Photo by Doug Taron

For more information about the Regal Fritillary visit [www.reimangardens.com/collections/insects/regal-fritillary/](http://www.reimangardens.com/collections/insects/regal-fritillary/)