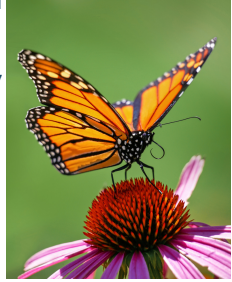




MONARCH CLUB REFERENCE SHEET

More than beautiful, monarch butterflies contribute to the health of our planet. While feeding on nectar, they pollinate many types of wildflowers. The flowers they choose are varieties that are brightly colored, grow in clusters, stay open during the day, and have flat surfaces that serve as landing pads for their tiny guests. Monarch butterflies are also an important food source for birds, small animals, and other insects.



Getting Started:

(<https://www.nps.gov/articles/monarch-butterfly.htm>)

- Always wash your hands before handling caterpillars or butterflies.
- Make sure you have access to lots of milkweed before bringing caterpillars or eggs home. They need new milkweed daily.
- Have a clean container to keep caterpillars in and be prepared to clean it of frass (poop) daily. Adding a mesh to the top of an ice cream container works great!
- Keep large caterpillars in a separate container from the small caterpillars. If hungry enough, the large ones will eat the small ones.
- Keeping caterpillars outside is best for their development.

Monarchs are typically found from mid-May to late October in southern Wisconsin. The final generation embarks on a 1,700-mile migration journey to central Mexico, where they spend the Winter.

Common Milkweed



Butterfly Weed

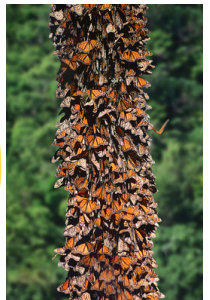


Swamp Milkweed



Common Milkweed

Not sure you found milkweed? Simply break off a piece of the leaf and if a milky liquid comes out of the veins it is milkweed!



When collecting milkweed for your caterpillars make sure to rinse and dry it so it is clean from any harmful pesticides.

In order to release your Monarch simply slide your finger from the front under the butterfly's abdomen and front legs until it latches onto your finger. Set it gently on a flower by slowly removing your finger down and away from the butterfly!

DID YOU KNOW?

Monarch caterpillars grow to 1,000 times their initial size in 2 weeks?!

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



MALE



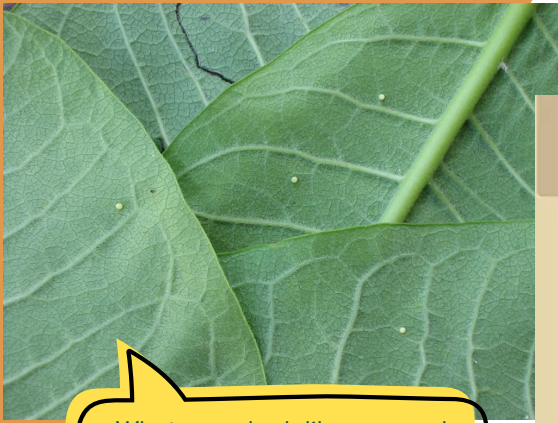
FEMALE



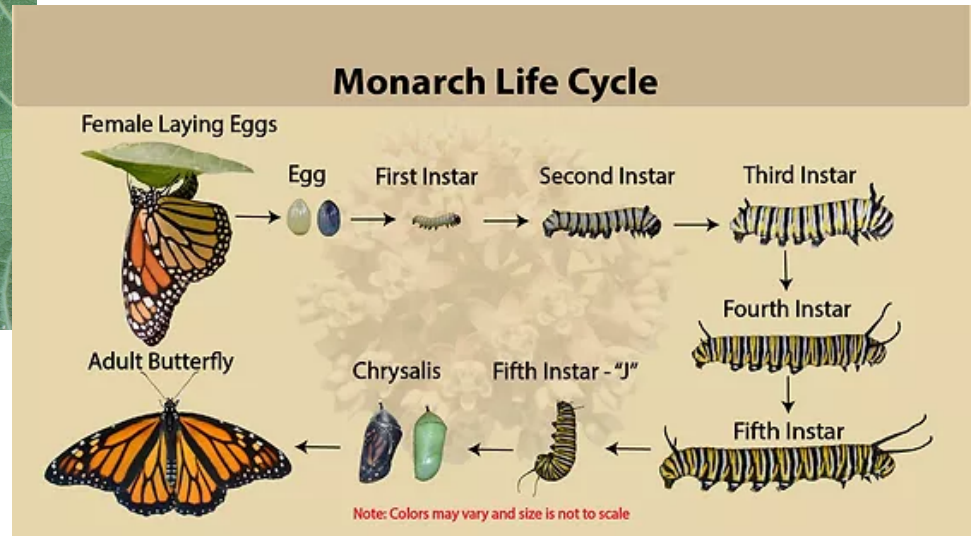
Dates of Club Meetings:
May 19 & June 16
July 7 & 21 ~ Aug. 4 & 18
Sept. 1 & 15



Monarch Metamorphosis



What eggs look like zoomed out! They are the same size as a period at the end of a sentence!



- Monarch females lay their eggs on milkweed, the only plant monarch caterpillars can eat and their host plant. The eggs are a milky white color.
- 4-6 days after being laid, eggs generally hatch. 1-2 days before hatching it turns gray. Or rather you will be seeing the black baby caterpillar on the inside!
- The baby that hatches will generally like to eat its own egg shell and will be in its First Instar, only a teeny 2-6 millimeters long!
- As the caterpillar grows into its next Instar, it will shed its skin because it is growing so fast. The caterpillar then likes to eat its shed skin for nutrients.
- When the caterpillar is fully grown (over 2 inches long) it usually leaves the milkweed plant, sometimes crawling 20 or 30 feet away from the milkweed, until it finds a safe place to pupate. Then it will make a silk pad and attach itself to the pad.
- Next, the caterpillar will hang, head down in a J shape for about 1 day.
- Just before it sheds its skin for the last time the tentacles will look limp and wrinkled.
- The caterpillar's skin is shed for the last time as it passes from the larval (caterpillar) stage to the pupa stage of metamorphosis. It is creating its chrysalis.
- A chrysalis will hang for around 10-14 days.
- About 1 day before the Monarch emerges from the chrysalis, you can see the orange and black wings of the Monarch butterfly inside.
- With no visible signs to signal the emergence of the butterfly from its chrysalis, the chrysalis suddenly cracks open and out comes the Monarch butterfly.
- Its wings are tiny, crumpled, and wet. The butterfly clings to its empty chrysalis shell as hemolymph, the blood-like substance of insects, is pumped through its body. This will enlarge the wings and strengthen the butterfly. It is also fusing the two parts of its proboscis together, the long tongue-like apparatus used to sip nectar. The Monarch is extremely vulnerable to predators at this stage because it is not yet able to fly.
- After an hour or two the butterfly is ready to fly and can be released into a good habitat.