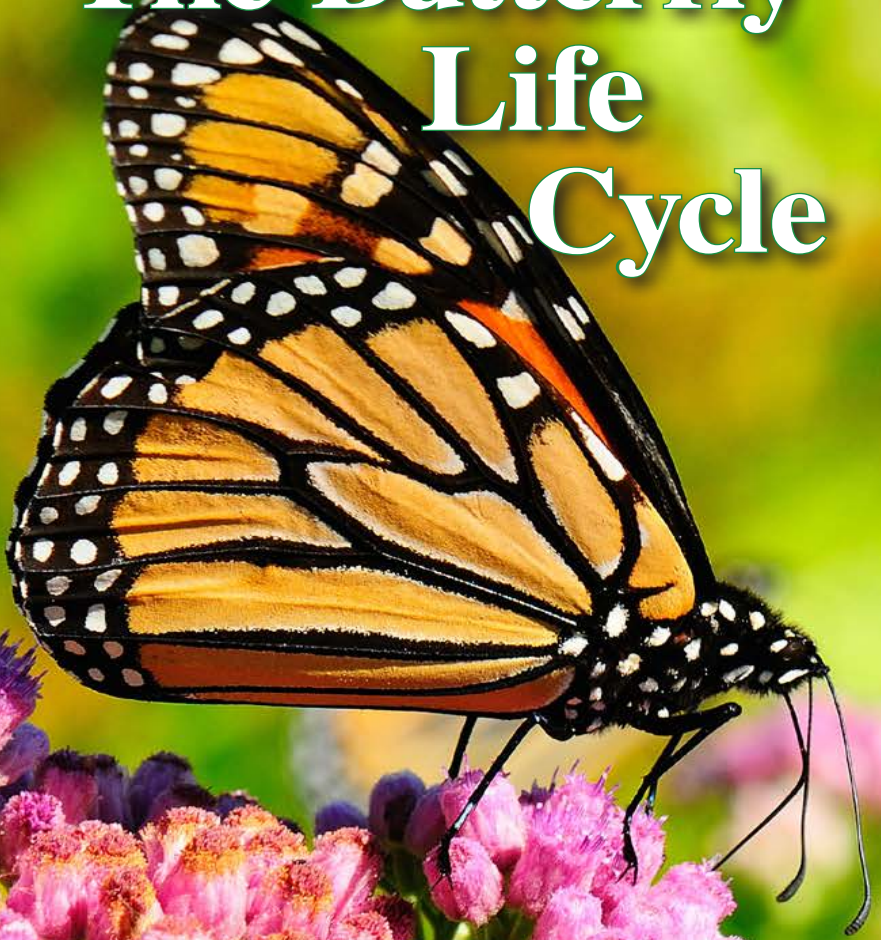


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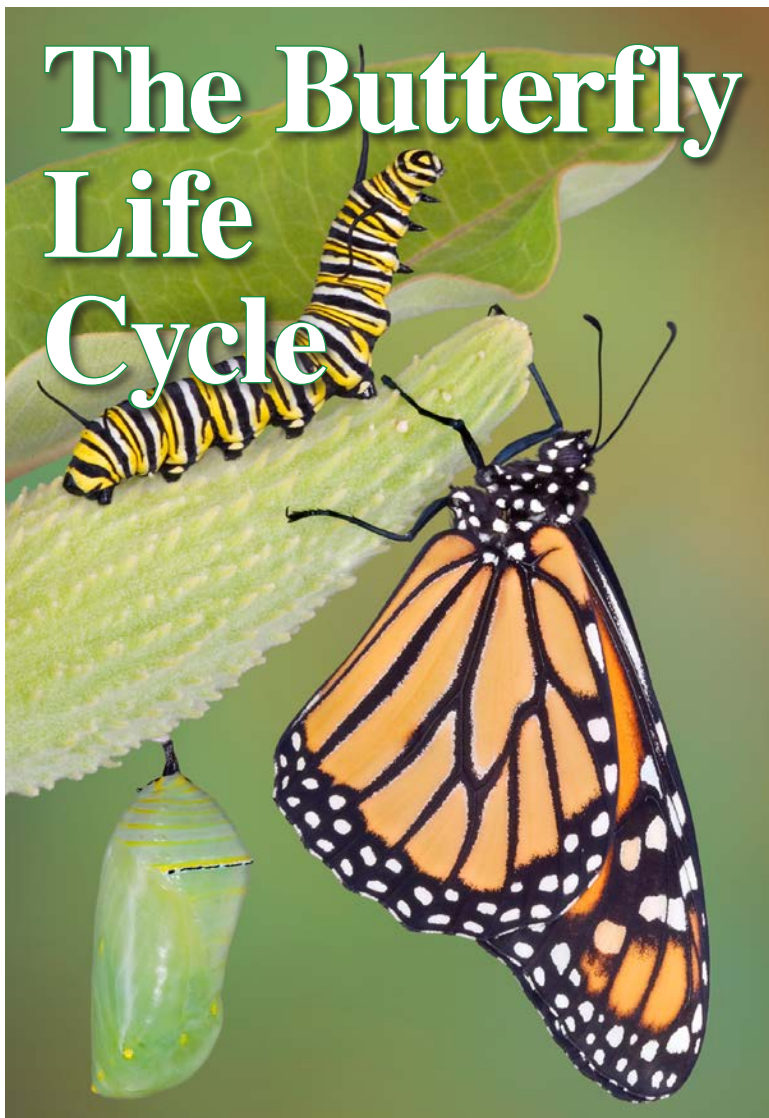
The Butterfly Life Cycle



Written by Torran Anderson

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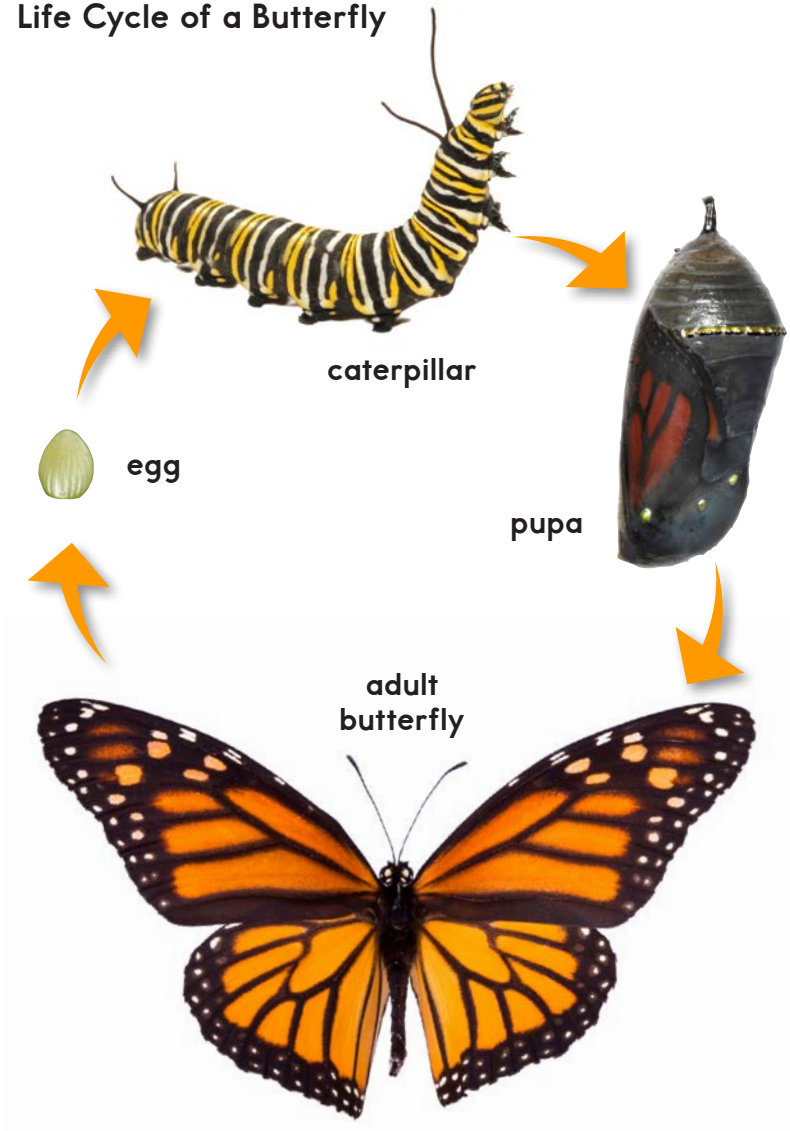
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Life Cycle of a Butterfly



The Life Cycle

A monarch **butterfly** has four **stages** in its life cycle.



A young caterpillar hatches from its egg. A female monarch butterfly usually only lays one egg on a leaf.

Egg

A female monarch butterfly lays an egg on a leaf.

A **caterpillar** grows inside the tiny egg. The egg hatches in three to twelve days.





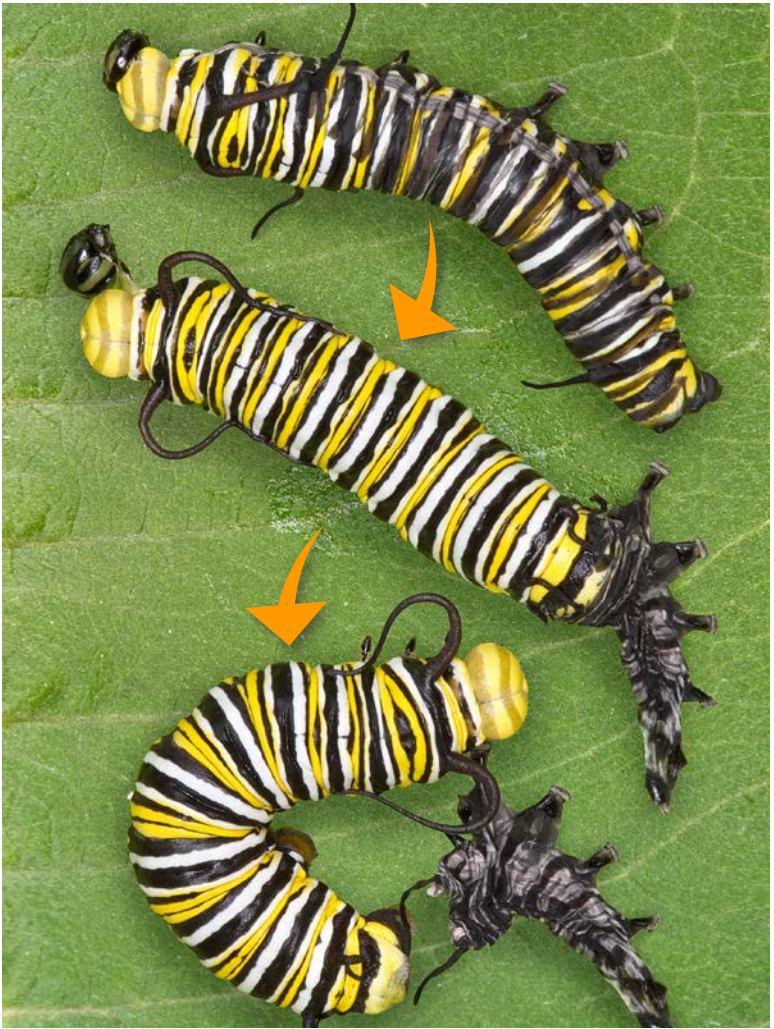
The young caterpillar eats its own shell. If there are two eggs on a leaf, the caterpillar will eat the other egg first!

The hungry caterpillar eats
all the time.

First, the caterpillar eats
its own eggshell.



Then, the caterpillar eats the leaf
it is on.



The caterpillar puts down sticky silk. The silk keeps the old skin in place while the caterpillar wiggles out of it.

The caterpillar grows quickly.

Its skin does not grow.

The caterpillar's skin splits and peels away.





Do You Know?

Monarch caterpillars only eat the leaves of the milkweed plant.

The caterpillar's bright black and yellow colors warn animals that they will get sick if they eat it.

New skin is under the old skin.

The caterpillar sheds its skin four to six times.

The caterpillar grows for two to four weeks.





The caterpillar's skin splits down its back like a zipper!

Pupa

When the caterpillar is grown,
it hangs from a branch.
It sheds its skin one last time.
The new skin is bright green.

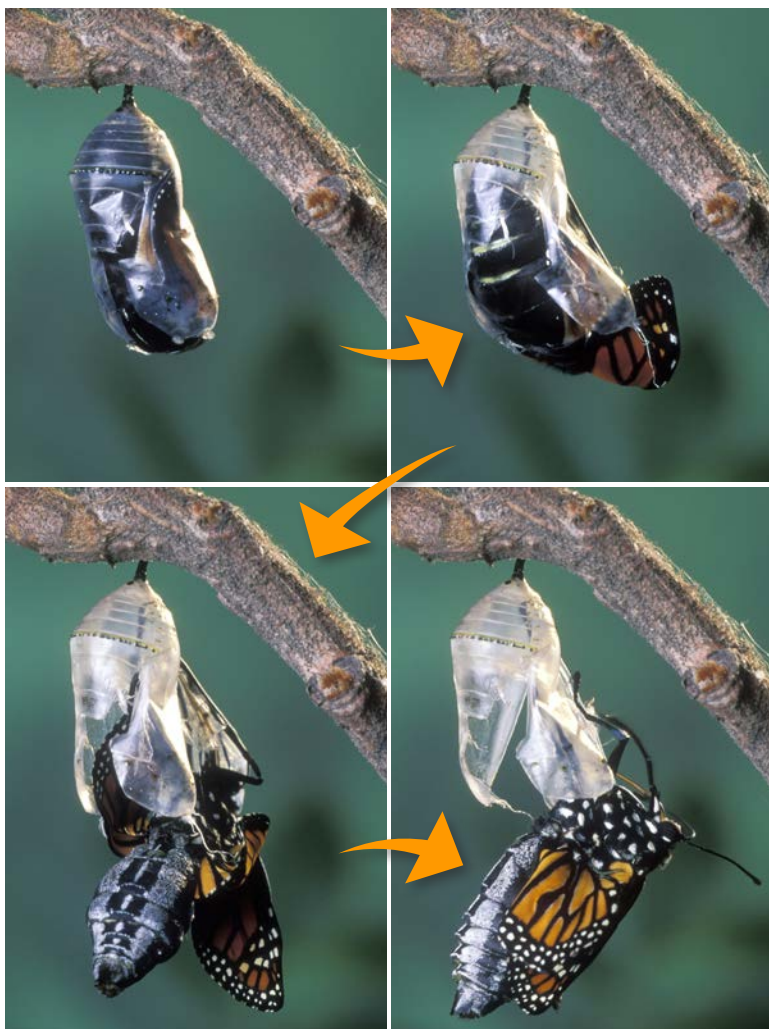


The green pupa looks like a leaf. The color helps it hide from other animals.

This green skin becomes hard.

The caterpillar is now a **pupa**.

It will stay inside its shell for one to two weeks.



The butterfly breathes in air to make its body bigger. Then, the shell splits so the butterfly can climb out.

Adult Butterfly

The pupa comes out of its shell.

It is now a butterfly.

Its wings are wet.

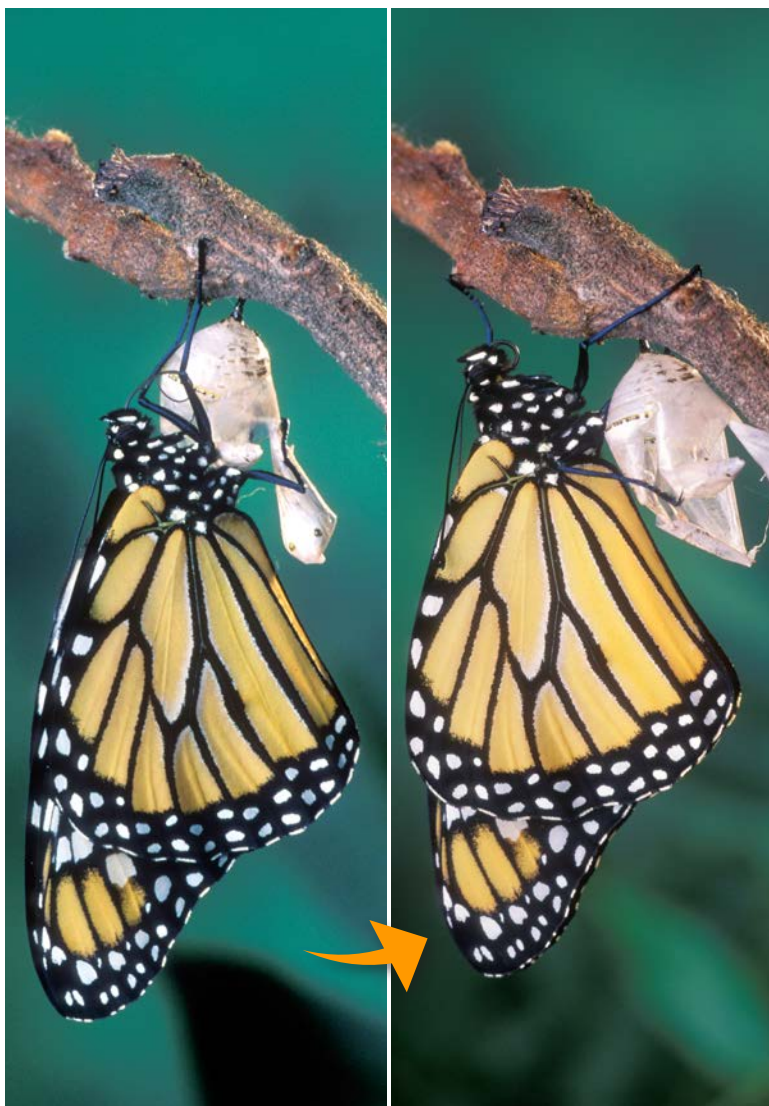




While the butterfly hangs, it pushes liquid into its wings to make them unfold.

The new butterfly rests.

The butterfly must hang upside down, or it will not be able to fly.

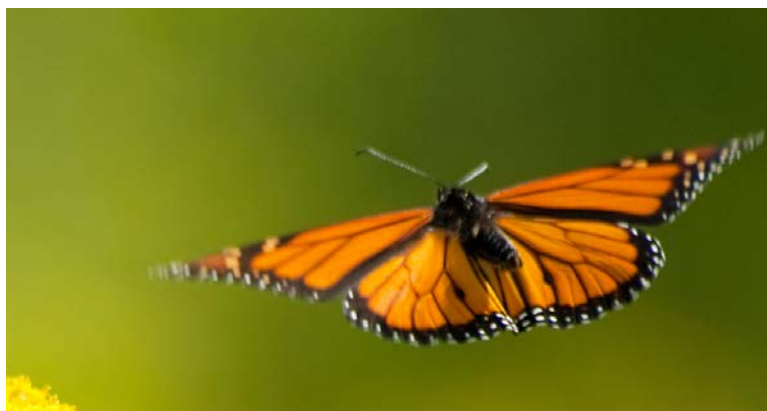


Most monarch butterfly wings are about 4 inches (10 cm) from tip to tip.

The butterfly hangs for
three to four hours.

The sun and air dry its wings.





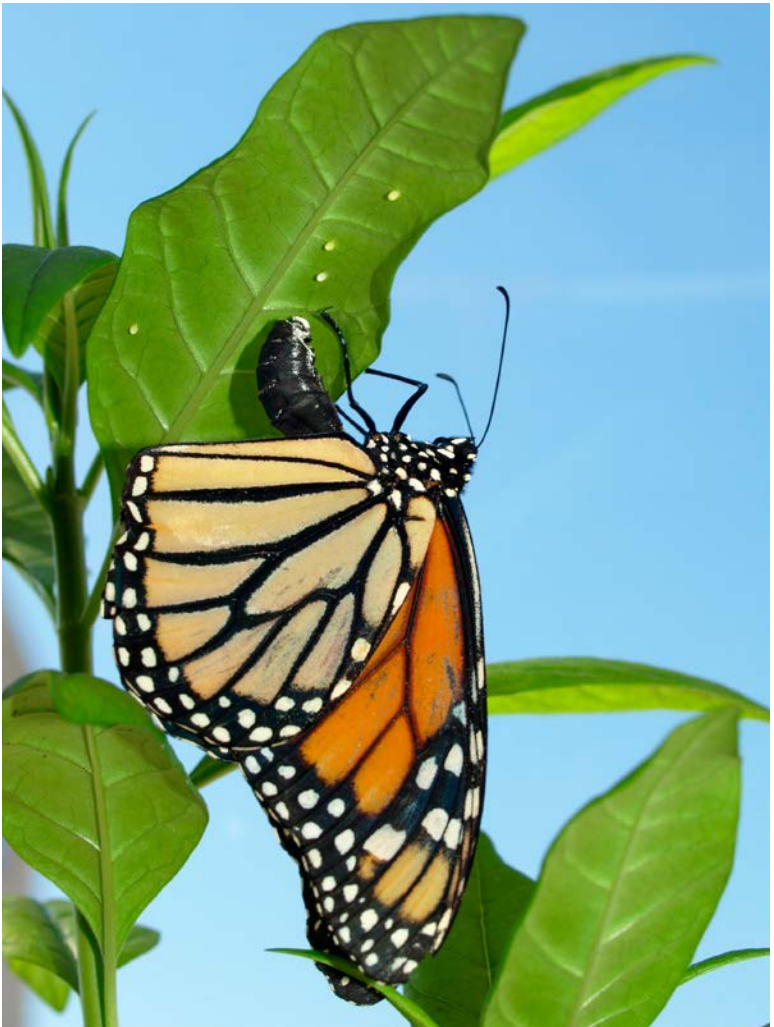
Monarch butterflies drink nectar, a sweet liquid made by plants. They sip nectar with a long tongue shaped like a tube.

Then, the butterfly is able to fly.

It flies off to eat.

It also searches for a **mate**.





A female monarch butterfly may lay 400 to 500 eggs in her lifetime!

A monarch butterfly may only live for two to six weeks.

The female monarch lays her eggs.
The butterfly life cycle starts again.

Glossary

- butterfly** (*n.*) an insect with four wings that are bright in color (p. 4)
- caterpillar** (*n.*) the larva of a butterfly or moth (p. 5)
- life cycle** (*n.*) the stages of change that an organism goes through during its life (p. 4)
- mate** (*n.*) the partner of an animal (p. 14)
- pupa** (*n.*) an immature insect in the stage between a larva and an adult (p. 10)
- stages** (*n.*) periods of time in the growth of something, such as an insect (p. 4)

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