

How to Find/Order Your Own Caterpillars

Prepared with help from Emily Zimmerman

Finding Monarch eggs and caterpillars can be an easy and fun activity to enjoy with your family in the summer months. Monarch butterflies lay eggs on milkweed, and as caterpillars, eat only milkweed leaves. Identifying the Monarch's host plant, milkweed, is the first step to finding caterpillars.

Common Milkweed



Swamp or Rose Milkweed



It's important to be aware of other plants growing around milkweed that could cause rashes such as poison ivy or wild parsnip. Please use caution when looking for milkweed.

After identifying milkweed plants, look for evidence of caterpillars.



For example, caterpillars will leave droppings, pictured in the photo on the right. As a caterpillar grows the droppings will be larger. Other evidence can be holes or chewed leaves.



While looking at the leaves on milkweed plants, it is possible to find Monarch eggs. Female Monarch butterflies tend to lay their eggs on the underside of the leaves, though eggs can be found anywhere on the plant.

Another way to obtain monarch caterpillars is by [ordering a monarch kit from Monarch Watch](#).