

REARING MONARCHS

Egg



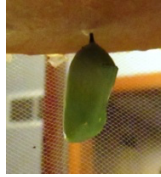
3-5 days

Caterpillar



~2 weeks

Chrysalis

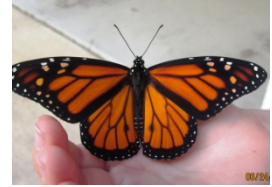


10-14 days



close to emerging

Butterfly

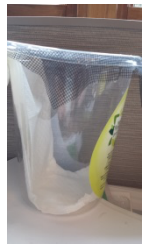


2-4 weeks (during summer)
7-8 months (fall/winter)

How to Raise Your Monarch

Materials Needed

- **Fresh Milkweed Leaves** — Milkweed is the **ONLY** plant monarch caterpillars will eat.
- Some **netting** (at the top, cutting a hole for the chrysalis) & a **paper towel** (along the side) for the Monarch to grip onto after eclosing (emerging)



Steps

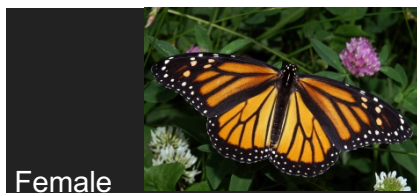
1. Provide fresh milkweed leaves daily
(milkweed leaves can be stored in a plastic bag with a damp paper towel around the base of the leaves in the fridge, they will last 8+ days)
2. Empty the caterpillar droppings on a regular basis *(placing a paper towel at the bottom makes for easier cleaning)*

Do not be alarmed...it's normal!

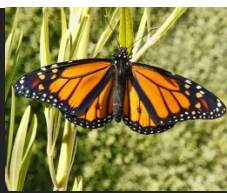
- The caterpillar will remain still or move to the side of the container on several occasions and remain there for many hours, sometimes longer than 24 hours. It is shedding its skin and will return to the leaves when it is through. Do not attempt to move the caterpillar during this important process.
- Approximately two weeks after hatching, the caterpillar will be ready to begin forming a chrysalis. To do this, it first hangs upside down in a J-position.
- After the butterfly has emerged its wings will be shriveled up and will drip. Let it hang for three to four hours as the wings dry.

Tips

- If the caterpillar is hanging upside down in a J-position, it is no longer necessary to feed it.
- If the weather is not cooperating it is okay to keep the butterfly indoors until the weather improves (for up to 24 hours). Monarchs do not eat for approximately 24 hours after emerging.



Female



Male

Male=two black dots on the lower wings

Cautions

- Bug spray, sunscreen, flea and tick medications, and other chemicals that may be on your hands can be deadly to caterpillars. Wash your hands before and after handling the caterpillars and/or milkweed.
- Your caterpillar does not need water. Young caterpillars can drown in a drop of water. Milkweed is all they need. It is okay to have a damp (not wet) paper towel around the base of leaves.
- Do not add other caterpillars or eggs to your container (to avoid spreading diseases, etc)
- Do not move a caterpillar in a J-position, a chrysalis, or the lid that it's on, for the first two days.
- Keep the container out of direct sunlight and away from window air conditioners or vents.

Why should I help the Monarch?

“It’s not about the Monarch. It’s about all species that share the same habitat. Monarchs are a starting point for a larger message. We need to pay attention to the habitats that sustain us, Monarchs are telling us that we aren’t doing that.”

- Chip Taylor, Monarch Watch



Thank you for taking care of this monarch caterpillar!

In the wild, on average only 1 out of 20 monarch caterpillar eggs will survive to become a butterfly (due to predators, herbicides, pesticides, lawn mowers, etc.).



Would you like more information?

Visit the following websites:

**Monarch Watch*: monarchwatch.org

**Journey North*: journeynorth.org

**Milkweed Matters* (Ragbrai/Seedball efforts):
milkweedmatters.org

Local Monarch Facebook group to help answer caterpillar care questions:

*Monarchs in Eastern Iowa:
monarchsineasterniowa.blogspot.com

PLEASE PLANT MILKWEED AND OTHER NATIVE FLOWERS FOR ALL POLLINATORS!