

# The Monarch Butterfly

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## What is the Monarch Butterfly?



Monarch Butterflies have orange and black stripes on their wings. The sides of their wings are spotted with white dots. These butterflies are known for their colorful looks.

## Life Cycle of the Butterfly



The butterfly begins as a small egg. When it hatches, it will be a caterpillar.



The caterpillars eat as much food as they can to prepare to be a butterfly.

The caterpillar eats a plant called milkweed. It is poisonous to all animals. When the caterpillar eats this plant, it becomes poisonous too, which protects it from being eaten.

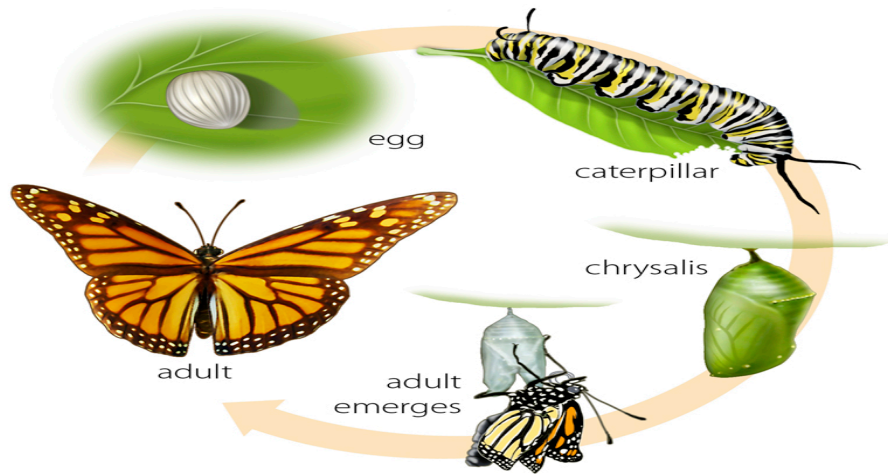


When the caterpillar gets too big for its skin, its skin splits and sheds. This is called **molting**. It happens four times over a two-week period.

Once the caterpillar sheds its skin for the last time, it will harden into a **chrysalis** or **pupa**. The chrysalis or pupa is the coating of skin that will protect the butterfly while it transforms.



While in the chrysalis stage, the butterfly starts to transform, or change. This can take 12 to 15 days, but when the chrysalis breaks a butterfly comes out.



## Migrating Butterfly

Monarch butterflies tend to live in the Northwestern parts of the U.S.



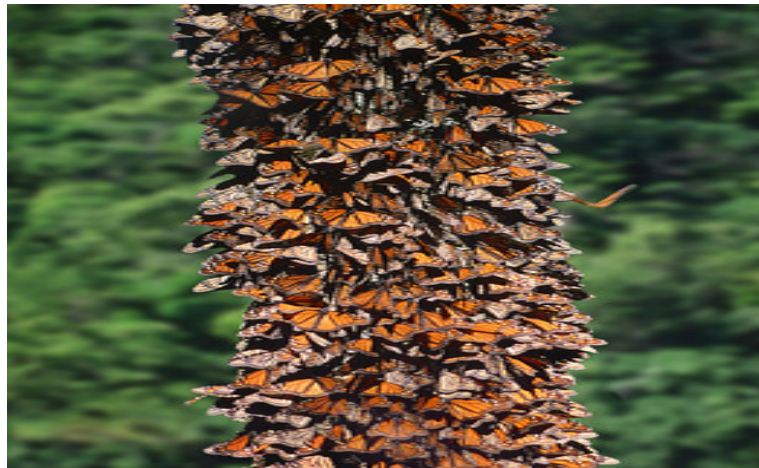
Although, they are known to live all over the country and can even be found in the state of Idaho.





The butterflies born in the summer or spring are fully grown in a few days. In the fall, many of them will begin to travel to a warmer place to live. This is called **migration**.

After the butterflies migrate, they join together to create butterfly trees in the warmer climate. Thousands of butterflies can land on just one tree. Sometimes branches fall off of these trees because they are so heavy.



## **Review Questions:**

- What is the chrysalis?
- What does migration mean?
- What colors are Monarch butterflies?
- What plant makes the butterflies poisonous?
- What is molting?

## **Glossary**

Pupa or Chrysalis: The hardened skin of the caterpillar that protects the butterfly.

Migration: Moving from one place to another.

Molting: When the caterpillar sheds its skin.

# Works Referenced

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# Common Core State Standards

RL.1.2: Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

RI.1.4: Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.

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