



MONARCH BUTTERFLY

Naturaskola Explorer Guide

Materials Needed:
pen or pencil, binoculars (optional)

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES CAN BE FOUND WHEREVER MILKWEED IS IN BLOOM IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA AND AUSTRALIA

Monarch butterflies need milkweed plants (*Asclepias* spp.) to survive. Monarch butterflies need these plants to lay their eggs because their caterpillars only eat milkweed. Milkweed plants contain a sap that is toxic, the caterpillars eat this toxin and it prevents them from being eaten by birds.



MILKWEED

Joe Pye weed (*Eutrochium* sp.) is a perennial that adult Monarch butterflies love to drink nectar from and is important food source for all types of pollinators including bees and moths.



JOE PYE WEED

Monarchs also love to drink the nectar from verbena (*Verbena* sp.) which is also another plant loved by all types of pollinating insects!



VERBENA



Look around your yard or neighborhood, do you see any of these plants?

MONARCH MIGRATION

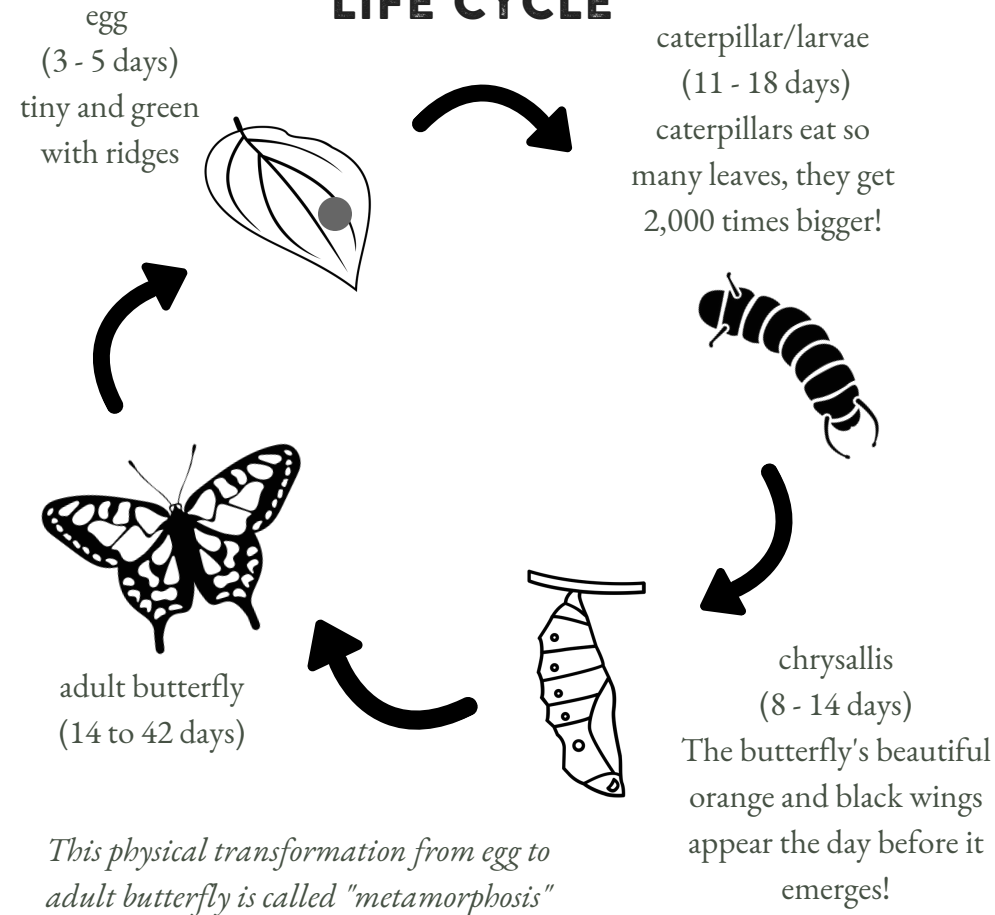
MIGRATION IS THE MOVEMENT OF AN ANIMAL OR GROUP OF ANIMALS FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER. MONARCH BUTTERFLIES MIGRATE TO WARMER TEMPERATURES BECAUSE THEY CANNOT SURVIVE COLD WINTERS. THERE ARE NOT MANY MILKWEED PLANTS DOWN IN THE WARMER AREAS HOWEVER, SO THE BUTTERFLIES MUST FLY NORTH AGAIN TO HAVE THEIR BABIES.



Monarch butterflies are the only butterfly species to have a two-way migration pattern like birds!

You can follow along with the monarch's annual migration by visiting the website: <https://journeynorth.org/monarchs>

MONARCH BUTTERFLY LIFE CYCLE



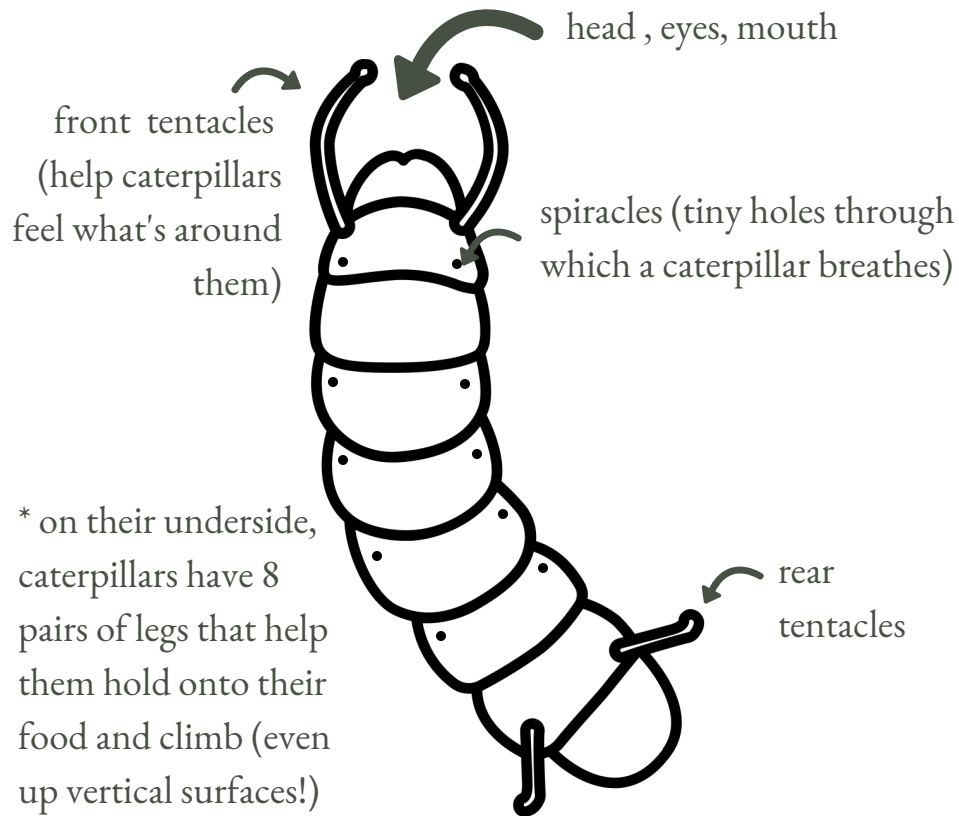
THE LIFE CYCLE OF A MONARCH BUTTERFLY LASTS A TOTAL OF 6 TO 8 WEEKS. SEVERAL GENERATIONS ARE BORN THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE BUTTERFLY'S MIGRATION.



Look around the milkweed plants including under the leaves. Do you see any eggs (they are as small as the head of a pin, light green and have ridges) or caterpillars?

CATERPILLAR ANATOMY

THE MAIN JOB OF A MONARCH CATERPILLAR IS TO EAT, EAT, EAT! THEY NEED TO GET LOTS OF FOOD AND ENERGY BY EATING MILKWEED LEAVES SO THEY CAN FORM A CHRYSALIS AND TURN INTO A BUTTERFLY!

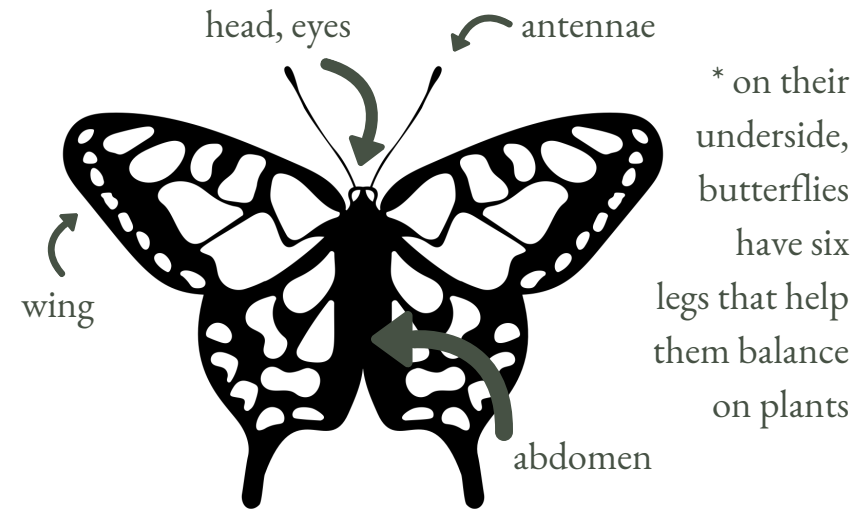


* on their underside, caterpillars have 8 pairs of legs that help them hold onto their food and climb (even up vertical surfaces!)



Caterpillars have poor eyesight and mostly use their tentacles to find their way. Which senses do you use to navigate the world around you?

BUTTERFLY ANATOMY



* on their underside, butterflies have six legs that help them balance on plants

Butterflies don't have noses, but they have smell receptors on their antennae and legs. This helps them find the flowers with nectar for them to eat.

Butterflies don't have mouths either! Instead, they have a long straw-like body part that they use to drink nectar or other liquids. It is called a proboscis.

EXPLORER NOTES

DATE OF MY ADVENTURE: _____

WHO CAME WITH ME: _____

WHERE I WENT: _____

WHAT I SAW: _____
