

butterfly adventures



MONARCH BUTTERFLY



Monarch butterfly egg

Females lay their eggs under a leaf which acts as an umbrella from the weather and shelter from predators.

Average egg time: 4 days



Caterpillars (larva) will eat, eat eat!

Caterpillars go through 5 growing stages called instars.

At each stage they get too big for their skin and need to shed it. This may look like a black dead caterpillar but no need to worry, it's natural! They will often eat that shed skin. There will be lots and lots of frass (poop) produced by these hungry caterpillars.

Average caterpillar time: approximately 2 weeks.

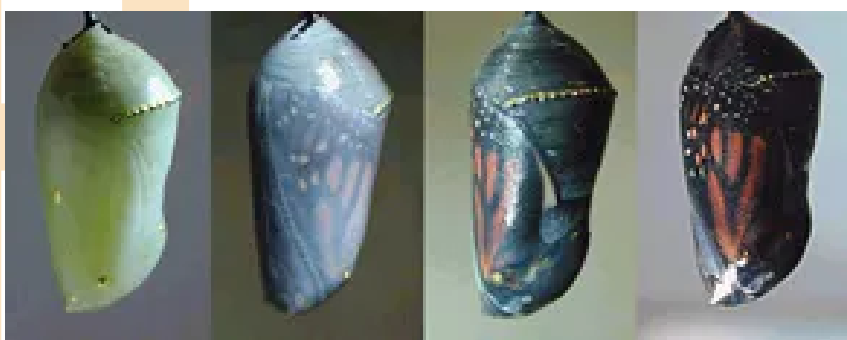


The males have a small black dot on each of the hind wings



At the final stage the caterpillar will be about 5cm long.

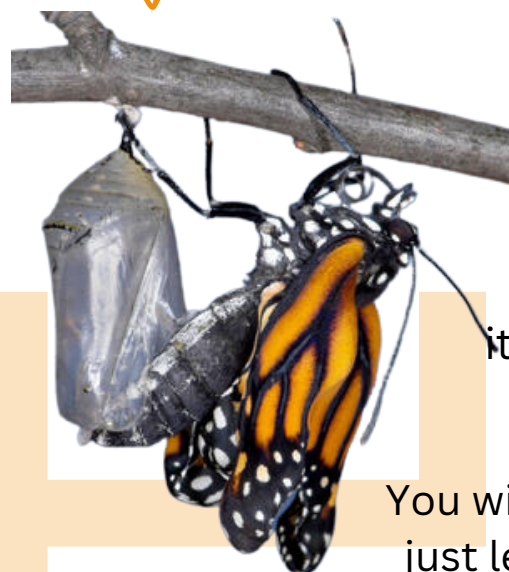
To form a chrysalis they start by making a pad of silk. They then hang upside down in a "J" shape. When they are ready, their skin will split for the final time, revealing the chrysalis.



After a few days the outer shell of the chrysalis will harden and change from bright green to emerald green flecked with gold spots.

The chrysalis will darken and become transparent when it is time for the butterfly to emerge. The chrysalis shouldn't be in the very dark stage for more than 5 days.

Average chrysalis stage: 8-15 days



When the butterfly emerges it will have a very swollen abdomen and crinkled wings. Over the next few hours it will pump fluid throughout its wings to expand and harden them into shape.

You will see red fluid underneath it which is just left over pigment and tissue from the metamorphosis. It is not blood, it is called meconium.