

# MONARCH BUTTERFLY

LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE  
*Danaus plexippus*



**Did you know?** Monarch butterflies are poisonous. Their toxins come from eating milkweed when they were in the caterpillar stage.

**Did you know?** Monarch butterflies have been added to the endangered species list.

**Did you know?** The female butterfly lays each of her 300-500 eggs individually over a two-to-five-week period. After a short while, the eggs open up, and out come the baby caterpillars! The caterpillars eat all the milkweed leaves they can and begin to spin protective cases around themselves – the pupa stage, also called “chrysalis”. In approximately one to two more weeks, they complete their metamorphosis and become adult monarch butterflies, displaying their distinct black and orange colors.

## **Look and see!**

This is the caterpillar eating the poisonous milkweed plant! It is getting ready for the chrysalis stage.



This photo shows the Monarch Butterfly completing its metamorphosis and becoming an adult with bright orange and black colors!

After 10-14 days, the chrysalis becomes see-through, and inside, you can spot the new butterfly. It hangs upside down for a few hours to allow its wings to dry before it's ready to take off in the sky!



Credits:

Photos: PBS (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/nearly-billion-monarch-butterflies-vanished-since-1990>), butterfly on a flower, Flickr (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lastingimages/10484286795>), caterpillar on milkweed plant, Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com/animal/monarch-butterfly>), metamorphosis of butterfly.

Facts: Source 1 (<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/facts/monarch-butterfly>); Source 2 (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/facts/monarch-butterfly#:~:text=The%20monarch%20butterfly%20is%20one,and%20Mexico%20for%20the%20winter.>); Source 3 (<https://www.britannica.com/animal/monarch-butterfly>)

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