

All insects are divided into groups called “orders.”
 Butterflies belong to the lepidoptera order, (which includes moths).
 The word lepidoptera is a combination of the latin words “lepto” (scale) and “ptera” (wing).

Individual lepidoptera are grouped into “families” and “subfamilies.”
 Listed below are the scientific and common names of the six butterfly families.

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|--|--------------------------------|
| Hesperiidae - Skippers | Papilionidae - Swallowtails |
| Lycaenidae - Gossamer-wing Butterflies | Pieridae - Whites and Sulphurs |
| Nymphalidae - Brush-footed Butterflies | Riodinidae - Metalmarks |

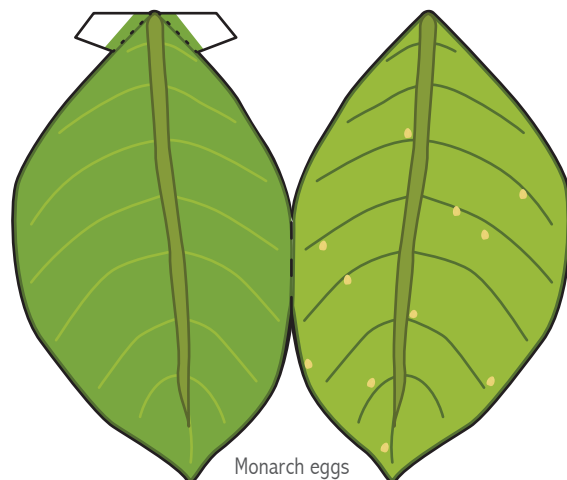
Each butterfly family contains hundreds to thousands of separate types of butterflies called “species.”
 The Monarch (Latin name: *Danaus plexippus*) is a species of butterfly belonging to the Nymphalidae family.

Regardless of the species, all butterflies have four main metamorphoses (changes) during its lifetime.
 These four metamorphoses are called “stages.”
 Each stage is very different, and very easy to identify. These are the egg, the larva, the pupa, and the adult.
 All of these stages put together are called the “life cycle.”

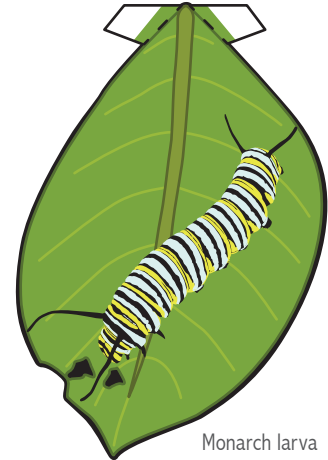
The life cycle begins with the egg.
 Butterfly eggs are very small, and come in a variety of rounded shapes. How an egg looks depends upon the species of butterfly that laid it.

Monarch butterfly eggs are shaped much like a teardrop.
 Female Monarch butterflies lay those eggs singly (one at a time) on the undersides of Milkweed leaves.

The egg is where the larva forms.
 When the larva is fully formed, it breaks out of the egg.
 This is called hatching.



A larva is commonly called a caterpillar.
 When the larva hatches it is very tiny and very hungry.
 Most larva eat leaves, which is where the adult butterfly lays its eggs.
 Monarch larva eat Milkweed leaves.



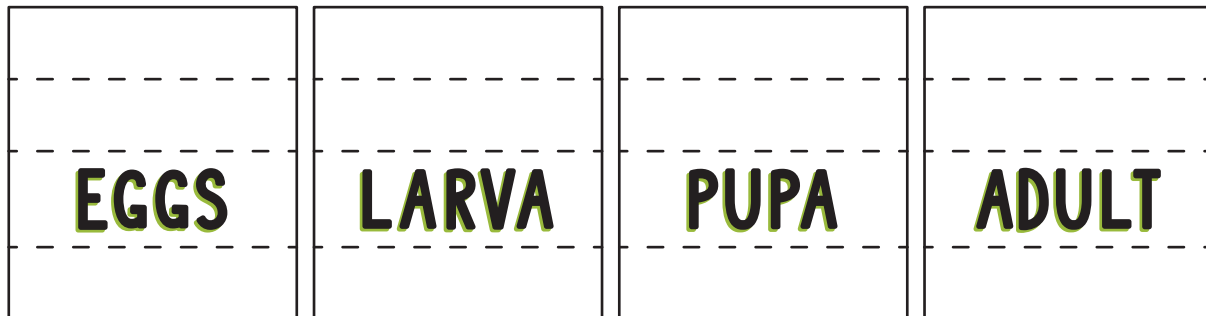
Monarch larva

Larva come in a wide variety of sizes, colors, and markings.
 Just like the egg, how a larva appears depends upon its species.

The larva spends most of its time eating and growing.
 This growth is so rapid that the larva outgrows its own skin and must shed it.
 This shedding of old skin is called “molting,” and the periods of growth are called “instars.” The Monarch larva undergoes 5 instars.

After the first molting, at the second instar, the Monarch larva develops a pattern of black, white, and yellow bands.

When the larva is fully grown it suspends itself upside down from a leaf or branch, and begins to form a pupa.



quadrama labels

Source of butterfly facts: www.butterfliesandmoths.org

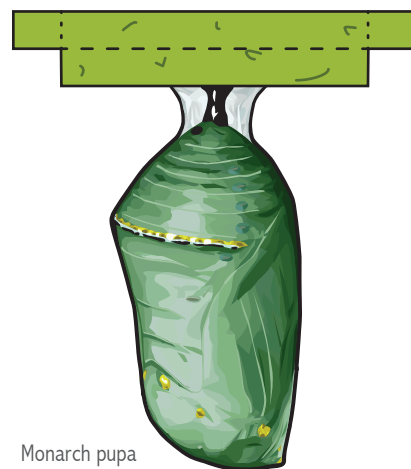
A pupa is also known as a chrysalis.

The pupa acts as protection while this last metamorphosis is going on inside of it.

The pupa is usually in shades of green or brown to blend into its environment. The exact shape and color depends upon what species of butterfly it is from.

The Monarch pupa is green with bright gold markings.

Inside the pupa, the larva is becoming a butterfly.
 When the transformation is complete, a fully formed butterfly emerges.



Monarch pupa

Etsy.com/shop/DigitalDesignsByRae

The butterfly is the adult stage.

As in every other stage, what the adult looks like, and its size, depend upon its species.

The wings of the Monarch butterfly have bright orange markings, surrounded by small white patches on a black background.

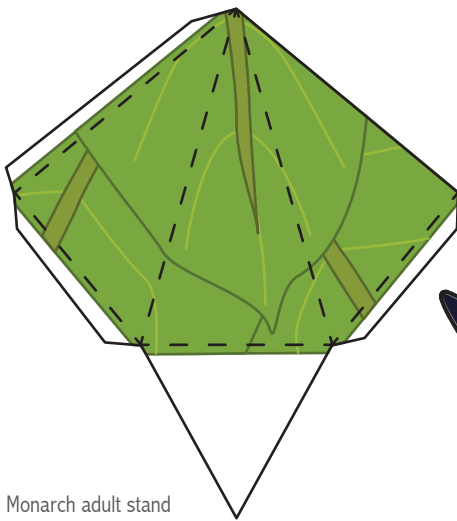
Butterflies are measured by their wing span (the distance from wingtip to wingtip when the wings are fully opened). The Monarch butterfly has a wing span ranging from 3 3/8 - 4 7/8 inches (8.6 - 12.4 cm).

Many butterflies do not eat during this stage, but some do eat nectar.

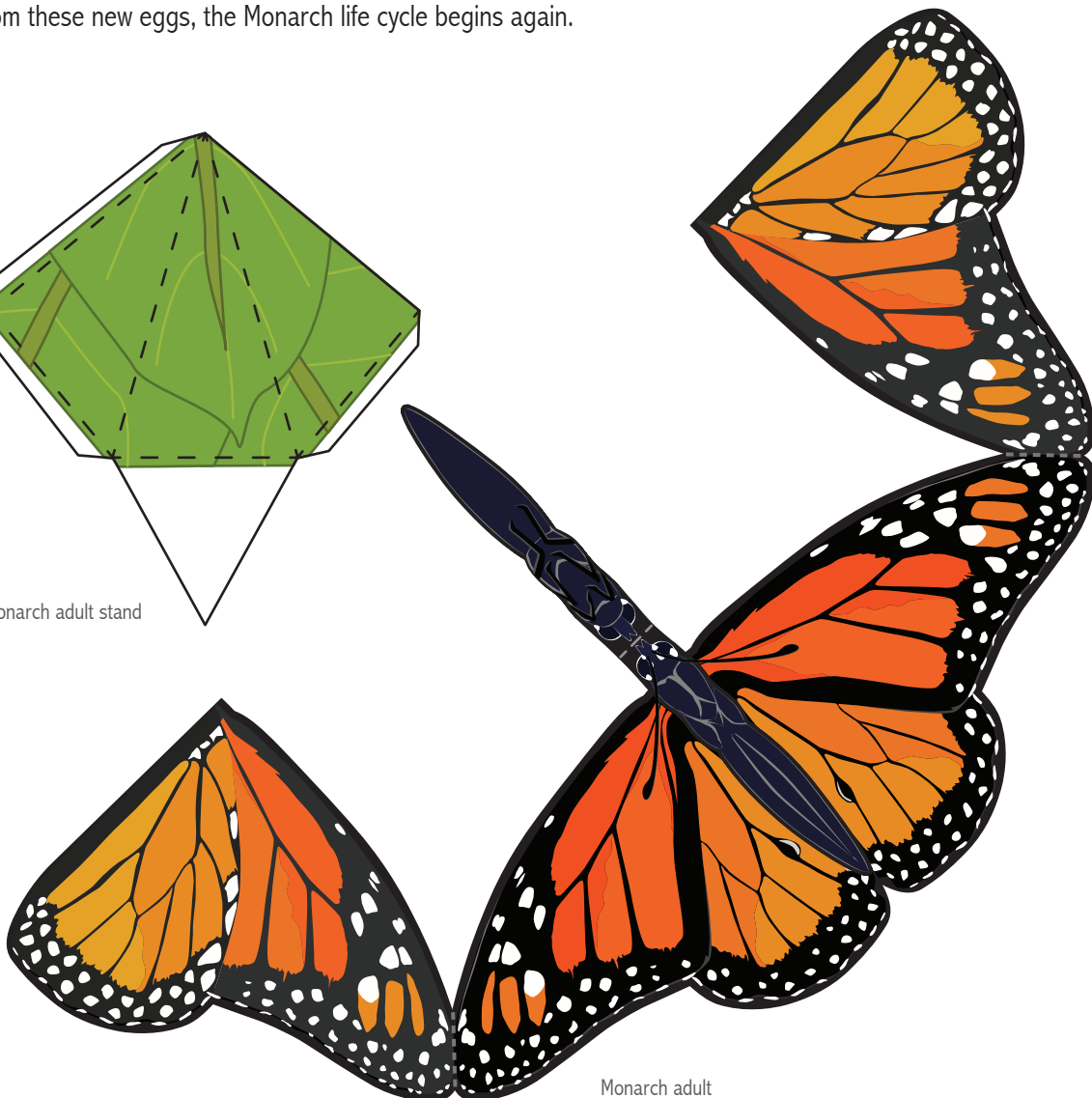
The Monarch butterfly eats the nectar from Milkweeds, as well as from a variety of other flowers.

The butterfly spends most of its time looking for a mate. Then the female butterfly flies off to look for the right plant to lay their eggs on. For the Monarch butterfly, that is the Milkweed plant.

From these new eggs, the Monarch life cycle begins again.



Monarch adult stand



Monarch adult

