



INFOGRAPHIC

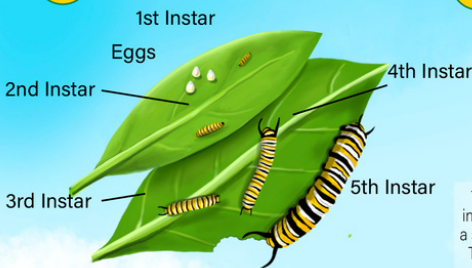
The Amazing Life of the North American Monarch Butterfly

*Danaus plexippus*

**RANGE**  
Southeastern Canada, United States, and Mexico  
**FOOD**  
Monarch larvae only eat milkweed. Adults can eat the nectar from all kinds of flowers!  
**PROTECTION STATUS**  
Not endangered but population is in decline

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**1 Egg and Larval Stages**



Monarch butterfly females lay their eggs only on the milkweed plant. After hatching, the caterpillars eat, eat, and eat milkweed leaves, growing and living through five larval stages called "instars" that are marked by molts where they shed their skin.

**2 J-hanging**



To prepare for pupation, the 5th instar larvae will spin a silk pad on a solid surface and face the ground. Then, the caterpillar will "J-hang" for 12-16 hours.

**3 Pupation**



When it's ready, caterpillar will start to swing around in circles and shed its skin to reveal a green chrysalis, which will solidify and become hard after a few hours.

**7 Migration**

Each year, North American monarchs migrate from Southeastern Canada to Mexico. See the side panel for more information!

Embrace change and adventure

**4 Chrysalis**



For 11-12 days, the butterfly will develop inside the chrysalis. Within 12 hours of eclosion, the chrysalis will become totally transparent, showing the butterfly inside!

**6 Adult**



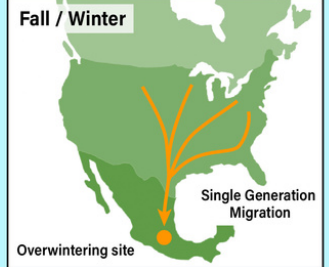
Adult monarchs are about 4 inches wide and have bright orange wings with black veins and edges. Small white spots span the edges of the wings. Male monarchs have an extra dark spot in the middle of their hindwings, but females do not.

**5 Eclosion**

The adult butterfly emerges after about two weeks in the chrysalis. After emerging, the butterfly will hang upside down for a few hours until its wings are dry.

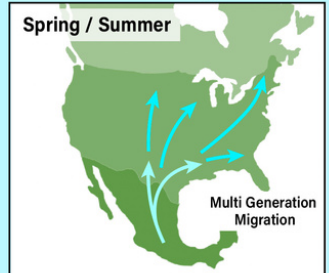
Monarch Butterfly Migration

Southern Migration



Monarch butterflies start their southern migration in the fall once the weather starts to get colder and the days get longer. During this migration, a single monarch butterfly can fly up to 3,000 miles! The monarchs all migrate to a single site in central Mexico where they stay the winter.

Northern Migration



Once winter is over, the monarchs will begin flying north. Once they mate and lay eggs, these monarchs will die, but the next generation and the one after will continue to fly north back to Canada.

