



BUTTERFLY LIFECYCLE



Stage 1: Egg

A butterfly starts life as an egg. Egg shape is dependent on the type of butterfly that laid the egg. Eggs are usually laid on leaves.



Stage 2: Larva

When the egg hatches, the larva, or what we call caterpillars emerges. At this stage the larva's main goal is to eat. The larva's mother must choose specific leaves to where she lays her eggs because each caterpillar type has their own preference of what leaf to eat. Larva's molt several times during this stage as it continually eats and grow.



Stage 3: Chrysalis

Once the caterpillar is done growing to their maximum length/weight, they form themselves into a pupa, also known as a chrysalis. From the outside of the pupa, it looks as if the caterpillar may just be resting, but inside caterpillar are undergoing a remarkable transformation, called 'metamorphosis,' to become a butterfly.



Stage 4: Butterfly

When the caterpillar has done all the changes inside the pupa, an adult butterfly emerges. When the butterfly first emerges from the chrysalis, both of the wings are going to be soft and folded against its body. This is because the butterfly had to fit all its new parts inside of the pupa.



MONARCH MIGRATION



Why do monarch butterflies migrate to the south and how do they know when its time to migrate?

Some species of butterflies can overwinter as larvae, pupae, or even as adults. Monarchs, however, cannot survive the cold winters of northern climates. Monarch butterflies know when to travel south using environmental cues, they use combination of air currents and thermals to travel long distances.



Monarch butterfly migration cycle:

The monarch butterfly's annual cycle involves four phases: Over wintering in Mexico from November through February, the spring migration from March through mid-June which includes breeding and egg laying in the south, late spring and summer breeding in the north from mid-June through mid-August, and the fall migration from mid-August through October. The monarchs that spend the winter in the mountains of central Mexico are the fourth and final generation of a cycle that starts over each year.

