

The life cycle of a Monarch butterfly:

Did you know that a butterfly begins life as a caterpillar? Butterflies are insects which go through a complete life cycle made up of four stages. This includes egg, larva, pupa and the adult stage.

Egg stage

First, a female monarch butterfly lays a small, round egg on a suitable leaf. This is important because once the egg hatches the leaf will provide all the food. Then, after around four days the egg hatches and a larva, also known as a caterpillar, emerges.

Larva stage:

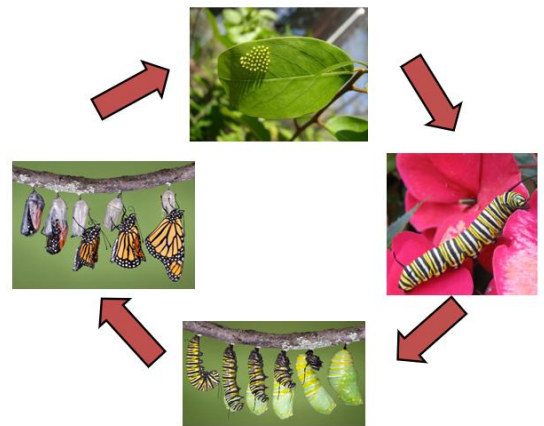
Then, in the larva stage, the small caterpillar gets straight to work and begins eating the leaf around it. For around 2 weeks, the caterpillar eats and eats. As a result of it becoming larger, it sheds its skins four times.

Pupa stage:

After that, when the caterpillar is two weeks old, it will find a place to create its chrysalis and shed its skin one last time. This is usually on the underside of a leaf. This is known as the pupa stage and lasts for 8 to 10 days. Inside the chrysalis, the caterpillar is developing wings to transform into a beautiful butterfly.

Adult stage:

Finally, once the 10 days have passed, the butterfly slowly emerges from the chrysalis and it begins to create a straw out of its proboscis. It then sucks the nectar through the straw. The blood pumps through the body of the butterfly and into the developing wings, causing them to fully expand in a few minutes. The transformation of a butterfly is then complete.



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