



# MONARCH LIFE CYCLE

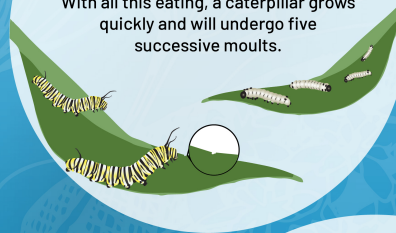
## 1. Egg:

Females usually lay one egg per milkweed plant, gluing it to the underside of a leaf to protect it from the weather.



## 2. Caterpillar (larva):

Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed – making them specialists. With all this eating, a caterpillar grows quickly and will undergo five successive moults.



## 3. Pupa (chrysalis):

For the fifth moult, the caterpillar will go in search of a well-camouflaged spot high off the ground where it can pupate. The green colouring and small size of the pupa (3cm) make it difficult to spot in the wild.



Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) are easy to recognize due to their orange wings with black veins and white-spotted edges.



The caterpillars have showy white, black and yellow stripes, and black filaments at either end.



Their bright colours warn predators of their toxicity.



## 4. Adult (emergence):

When the adult butterfly emerges from the pupa case, its first stop is any nectar bearing flower so it can stock up on energy to begin reproducing. Adult monarchs usually live for 3 to 5 weeks.



## The "Special Generation":

The butterflies that emerge in late August and early September are the migratory generation. They will preserve as much energy as possible for their coming journey to overwinter in the mountains of central Mexico. These adults will survive for up to eight months.

