

In the wild, only one or two of every 100 Monarch eggs will develop as butterflies.



## You can improve the odds by raising Monarchs!

**Hunt for monarch eggs on milkweed plants. Peak season is July and August in Wisconsin.**

Look for them when and where you see monarch butterflies landing. Don't know what milkweed looks like? Conduct an internet search for *Asclepias*.



Eggs are tiny and most often found on the underside of leaves in sunny locations. Pick the milkweed leaf or leaves with the egg, or eggs, on it before a wasp or other predator eats it.

Place the leaf on a small, clean piece of paper towel moistened with clean water, in a vented, plastic container. Do not expose eggs, caterpillars or butterflies to direct sunlight, air conditioning or heating. Mimic the outdoors.

**CAUTION!** Too much moisture is a killer and will cause the insect at any stage to rot. If moisture beads inside the container, wipe it dry. Within a few days, the egg will hatch, with a tiny caterpillar eating its way out, making a crescent moon shaped hole on the leaf. Once hatched, you need to provide fresh, clean, chemical free milkweed to the cat, or caterpillar, regularly, and eventually daily.

The caterpillar will grow quickly and become an **EATING MACHINE!** You need a cage or a container, like a clean plastic tote or aquarium, to keep the caterpillar safe from predators like wasps, ants, and beetles. It must be well ventilated and shielded from direct sunlight. It is important to provide fresh milkweed in the cage. Put cut milkweed in ice water, in a lidded plastic cup with a hole in the lid. Vases are not recommended as cats could fall in the water. Another option is placing the caterpillar on a potted milkweed plant.

Clip a loose window screen, available at hardware stores, to the top of the container with clothes pins. Put newspaper underneath to catch the caterpillar frass, or droppings. **THIS MUST BE CHANGED FREQUENTLY** to keep the cage clean! Germs in the frass can make the caterpillars sick.



## THE LIFE CYCLE TAKES ABOUT A MONTH

Four days as an egg, then the first through fifth instars or molts take 10 to 14 days. After that they, then they 'wander' to form their beautiful, jade green chrysalis. Mesh netting is most important here to keep them from wandering to an unsafe place. They 'sew' a silk button and hang in a j-shape, usually in a quiet spot, out of direct sunlight.

**Do not let the caterpillar wander over any chemicals you have sprayed on a porch or patio!**

The chrysalis hangs for 10 to 14 days, depending on weather and humidity. The green chrysalis becomes opaque, then dark, then black, then clear when it is ready to emerge as a butterfly. The eclose, or emergence from the pupa case, happens quickly. It is amazing! The wings will be soft and damp. **DO NOT** touch them.

The butterfly must hang vertically, so wings take shape and dry properly, or it will die. After two **HOURS**, the butterfly will beat its wings slowly. Take it outside to release it within a day so that it can fly off to find flower pollen.

## ENJOY THE MIRACLE!

More information: [monarchwatch.org](http://monarchwatch.org) or [texasbutterflyranch.com](http://texasbutterflyranch.com)

