



# The Coolest Caterpillars at Cromwell Valley Park: Monarchs



Take a walk in our meadows to look for the host plant for a Monarch: Milkweed. A host plant is the main plant where Monarch Butterflies will lay their eggs and also eat!

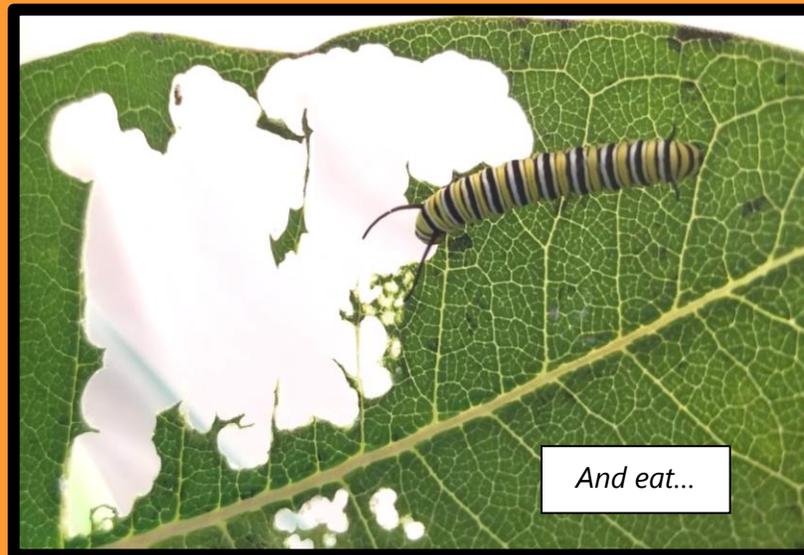
To find Monarch Butterfly eggs, look on the underside of Milkweed leaves. Look closely, they are teeny tiny!



You may even be lucky enough to see a Monarch Caterpillar hatch! Once they emerge from their egg, they are SUPER hungry, sooo hungry that they will even eat their own egg!



After eating their egg, they will start eating the Milkweed leaf



And eat...

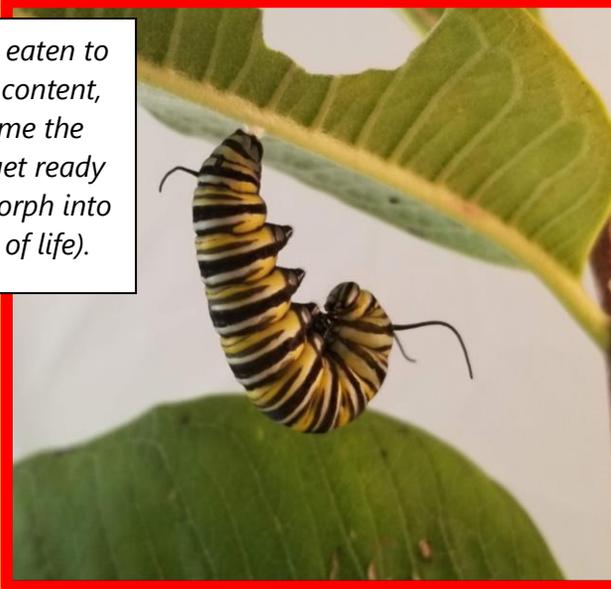


And eat until they can't eat no more!



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*Once they have eaten to their stomachs content, they will assume the "J" position to get ready to pupate (or morph into the next stage of life).*



*Not long after they will start to molt (or shed its skin). You will see their skin start to tear.*



*Then they will do a little dance called the "wiggle" and shed its skin*



*After about an hour of dancing the Chrysalis will harden and look like a tiny, shiny, jewel.*



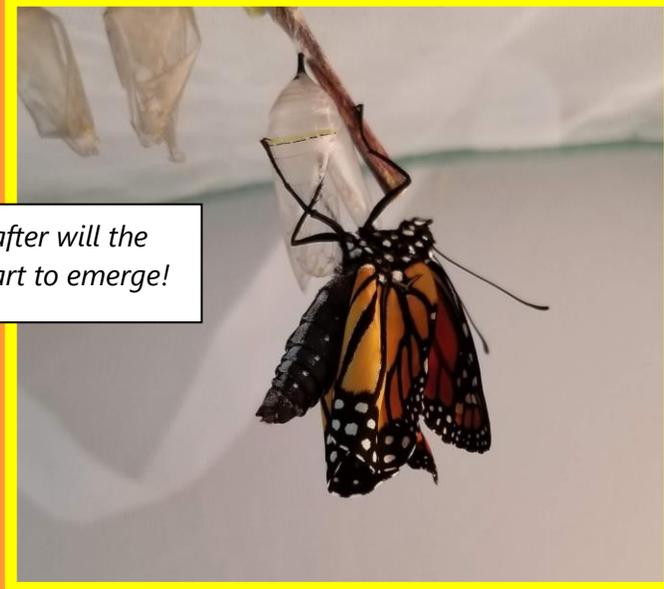


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*About 8 to 14 days the Chrysalis will start to become transparent and you will be able to see the colors of the Monarch wings!*



*Not long after will the Monarch start to emerge!*



*Much like the laundry you hang out to dry, so will the Monarch at this stage. Their wings are wet when they 1<sup>st</sup> emerge and will need to fully dry and straighten out before they can fly.*



*After a few hours of drying, they are ready to FLY!*



**How many Monarchs can you spot at Cromwell Valley Park?**