

Monarch Life Cycle & Milkweed

Adult - depends

Once an adult monarch emerges, or ecloses, from their chrysalis, it pumps fluids from its abdomen into its wings to inflate them. It spends several hours drying its wings before it can fly and find a nectar source. Summer generations only live 2-5 weeks, while overwintering generations may live up to 9 months.

Milkweed

Milkweed species are the host plant for monarchs. Creating diverse habitat for monarchs by planting native milkweeds and a variety of native forbs is critical.

Pupa - 10-14 days

At the end of the fifth instar stage, the caterpillar crawls away and hangs upside down forming a "J" shape. The caterpillar molts one final time to form a chrysalis, or pupa.

Egg - 3-5 days

Adult monarchs lay their eggs on milkweed.

Larva - 10-14 days

Larva, or caterpillars, only eat milkweeds. Monarchs only grow during this stage. They undergo five molting stages called "instars".

