

Monarch Butterfly

Danaus plexippus



Fun Facts

- Monarchs, like all other butterflies and moths, go through egg, larval (caterpillar), chrysalis (cocoon), and adult stages.
- Monarch caterpillars ingest milkweed that contains a toxic compound, the presence of this toxin is used by the monarch butterfly as a defense against predators.
- Other butterflies, such as the Viceroy, mimic the Monarch's colors to pretend that they are also toxic to predators.
- In late August, masses of monarch butterflies begin an epic migration stretching thousands of miles from areas across the United States and as far north as Canada (east of the Rocky Mountains) to overwinter in mountaintops of Central Mexico.

Looking for Monarchs

Adult black and orange butterfly has a 3-5" wingspan. The wings look like stained glass, with reddish-orange coloration and conspicuous black veins. bordered in

black speckled with white dots. Males have thinner veins with a black dot on the inside of the hind wings; females have thicker veins and lack the dot.



The yellow, black, and white caterpillar (left) and green chrysalis or cocoon (right) of the Monarch butterfly..

Where and When to Look

Monarch butterflies are found in the fields around Salt Point where a variety of wildflowers have been planted including milkweed, Joe Pye weed, butterfly



Butterfly weed

milkweed, swamp milkweed, common milkweed, purple coneflower, Indian blanket, scarlet sage, Tithonia torch, and zinnia. These wildflowers serve as host plants for monarch caterpillars and nectar plants for adult monarchs and other

important pollinators. Look for adults flying during spring and summer during the daytime. Carefully examine the underside of milkweed plants in the summer for the yellow, black, and white caterpillar and green chrysalis or cocoon.

More information

- For every thing Monarch, go to MonarchWatch.org
- Plant your own butterfly garden— see [Attracting Wildlife to Your Yard](#)
- Follow the Monarch Butterfly migration on [Journey North](#).

"Monarch butterfly populations are declining due to loss of habitat. To assure a future for monarchs, conservation and restoration of milkweeds needs to become a national priority."

Chip Taylor, Director, Monarch Watch