

# Identifying Monarchs by Life Stage



When checking milkweed plants for signs of monarch activity, it is helpful to look for specific signs that relate to the various life stages.



## How and where to look for eggs:

- Eggs are often found on newest growth, often the tiniest plants at the edges of a patch
- Often on the bottom side of a leaf (out of direct sunlight)
- May be found on shaded plants, especially when it's warmer
- If milkweed is scarce, eggs may be found on older plants under the youngest leaves
- Occasionally a female will lay more than one egg to a leaf or plant if milkweed are limited

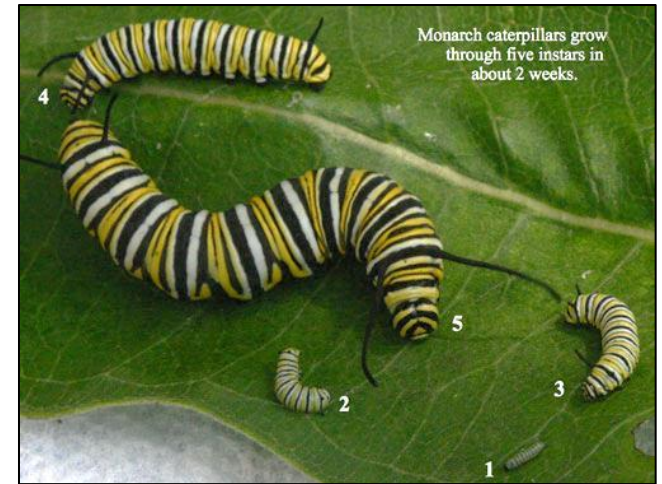


- It is possible to mistake beads of latex on the leaf as monarch eggs, so a magnifying glass or a close-up photo can help give you more detail



## How and where to look for caterpillars:

- Monarch caterpillars have distinct black, white, and yellow bands, with two pairs of black filaments (one pair on the head and one pair on the rear)
- After each molt, the caterpillar is in a later instar, or development stage
- They consume a lot of plant material as they grow
- Milkweed leaves with caterpillars are damaged and eaten
- Younger caterpillar instars eat shallow holes in leaves
- Small, dark caterpillar poop (frass) is visible on leaves
- Late-instar caterpillars often move to nearby plants or trees to pupate and can be very difficult to locate



## How and where to look for chrysalises:

- This life stage is extremely vulnerable for a monarch, so the chrysalises are meant to be camouflaged
- The jade green chrysalis will be difficult to spot!
- Pupae may be found on milkweed branches
- Search for nearby taller plants or structures within 30 feet, especially if you are certain that a caterpillar was nearing its pupation
- Do not remove chrysalises from their anchor points or handle them



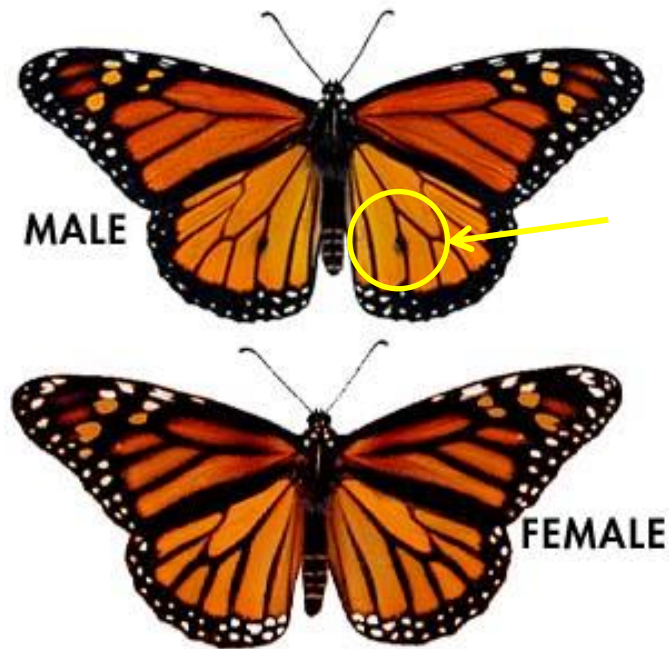
# Identifying Monarchs from Look-alikes:



Closely-related queen caterpillars are darker with 3 pairs of tentacles, and pupae are much smaller



## Comparing adults to similar-looking butterflies:



Adult males have a black spot on hind wing

Adult females have thicker black veins



Viceroy butterflies have a characteristic black band across each hind wing

Queen butterflies are dark reddish-orange, with white spots on orange (not on black)