

# MONARCH

*Danaus plexippus*

## EGG



Monarch egg

Height	→	1.2 mm
Length	→	0.9 mm
Duration	→	3 to 8 days

## DESCRIPTION

- Usually a single egg per milkweed plant, but sometimes several.
- Creme-coloured or yellowish, oval and slightly conical, covered in longitudinal raised ridges.

## WATCH OUT FOR FALSE EGGS!

Milkweed produces a sticky whitish sap (latex) that sometimes forms small bubbles on the leaves. Be careful not to confuse these droplets with monarch eggs!

- Small whitish bubbles, rather spherical.
- Size can vary and may resemble a monarch egg.



Monarch egg

Droplet of  
milkweed sap

Photos: André-Philippe Drapeau Picard, André Sarrazin

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## CATERPILLAR



Older caterpillar instars

Length	→	2 to 45 mm
Width	→	0.5 to 8 mm
Head	→	0.6 to 2.2 mm
Duration	→	7 to 17 days

### DESCRIPTION

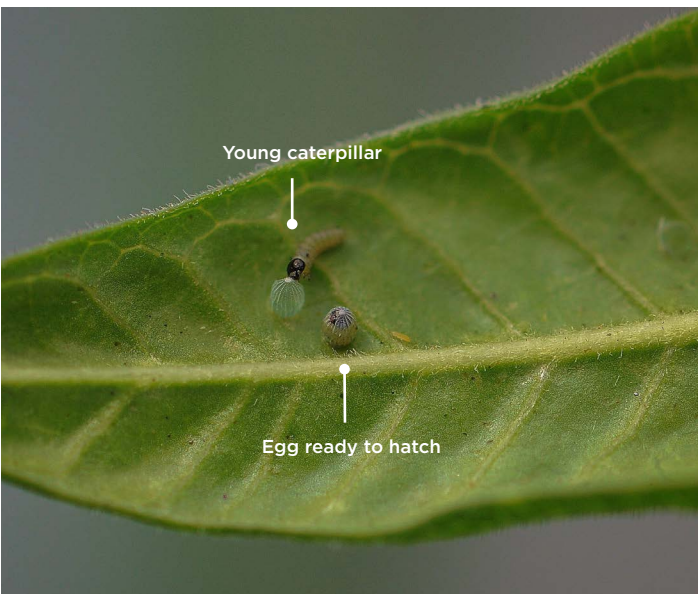
- Yellow, black, and white stripes.
- Black filaments near its head and at the tip of its abdomen (barely visible on young caterpillars).
- White spots on false legs (older caterpillars).

### NOTE

- Young caterpillars do not have coloured stripes. They have black heads, grayish-white or light green bodies, and fine dark lines.

### BEHAVIOUR

- Usually seen on milkweed plants, but older caterpillars move about looking for somewhere to pupate.
- Young caterpillars feed on the leaf, making semi circular holes, starting in the centre of the leaf. After a few days, they start to feed on leaf edges.



Young caterpillar

Egg ready to hatch

Photos: André Sarrazin

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## CHRYSALIS



Length → 3 cm  
Width → 1 cm  
Duration → 8 to 15 days

### DESCRIPTION

- Turquoise-green, with gold spots.
- Gradually darkens until the adult colours show through the transparent case, about 24 to 48 hours before the butterfly emerges.
- Excellent camouflage! Chrysalis are difficult to spot in the wild.
- Often found elsewhere than on milkweed plants.



Photos: André Sarrazin, Laurent Desaulniers



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## ADULT



**Wingspan** → 9 to 11 cm

**Duration** → 3 to 5 weeks  
or about 8 months  
(migratory generation)

### DESCRIPTION

- Orange wings with black veins and white-spotted edges.
- One of the largest butterflies in Canada.
- Males (♂) have circular black spots on their hind wings, which are absent in females (♀).



Photos: André Sarrazin