



BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM

Native Pollinators: The Monarch Butterfly



Monarch butterflies are a native pollinator to Vermont and New England. They migrate from Mexico and California to New England each year as part of their lifecycle.

As the butterflies travel to the northeast they will stop and lay eggs on Milkweed plants. When the caterpillars hatch, they will eat and grow before building their chrysalis and undergoing metamorphosis. Metamorphosis is the process of transforming from their immature form to their adult form. When they emerge after metamorphosis, they are the beautiful butterflies we recognize!

At the end of the summer, the last generation of butterflies will migrate to their winter habitat in Mexico and California. They will go into hibernation and wait for the next spring season to begin their cycle over again.

Monarch butterflies are active pollinators who feed on the nectar of flowers. They collect pollen from these flowers and can fly great distances to other flowering plants. Unfortunately, Monarch populations have dropped over 90% in the last 30 years, but there are ways you can help!

Stop using pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides. These chemicals cause an incredible amount of damage to wild pollinator populations in general. Try to find natural alternatives like using vegetable oil and mild soap to stop an aphid infection.

Plant Milkweed! Without Milkweed Monarchs could not survive. With developments destroying so much native habitat it is increasingly difficult for butterflies to find a place to lay their eggs.

And finally, the best thing you can do is stay informed!

You should be seeing Monarchs in mid to late summer in VT, so you have plenty of time to prepare for their arrival!

Online resources to learn more about Monarch butterflies:

Watch a 10-minute video about Monarch migration here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBakLuH6kDY>

Check out this video about the Monarch lifecycle:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsTg-rO8JrM>

Learn about more natural pesticide options for your garden here:

<https://www.treehugger.com/lawn-garden/8-natural-homemade-insecticides-save-your-garden-without-killing-earth.html>

You can find the species of Milkweed native to our area here:

<https://monarchbutterflygarden.net/milkweed-plant-seed-resources/>

The latest information on Monarchs and pollinators can be found on these sites:

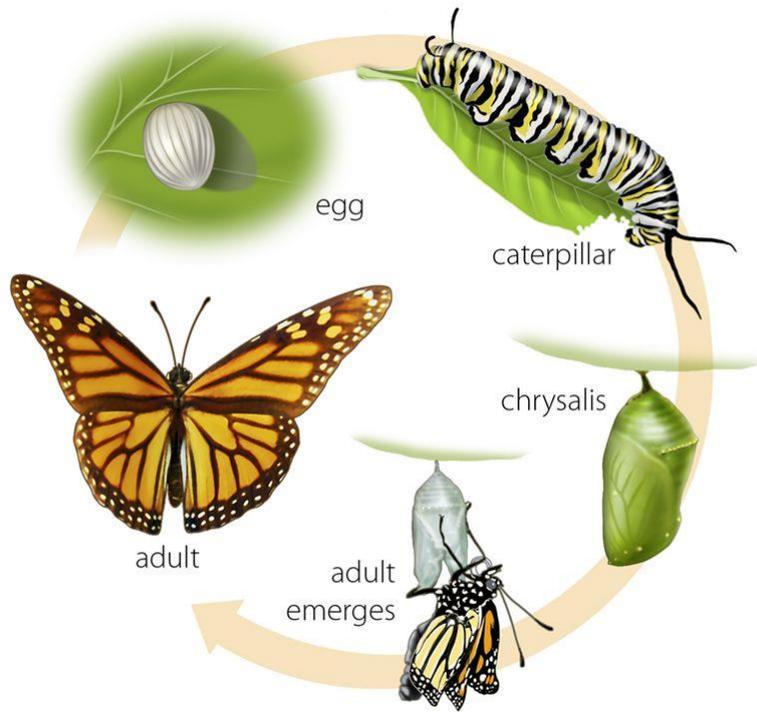
<https://www.pollinator.org/monarch> and <https://www.monarch-butterfly.com/>.

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Monarch Quick Facts

- Monarch butterflies are a native pollinator that lives part-time in Vermont and New England.
- Their winter habitat is in Mexico and California.
- In order to complete their lifecycle, Monarchs need Milkweed plants to lay their eggs on.
- Monarch caterpillars build a chrysalis which is where they undergo metamorphosis.
- Metamorphosis is the process of transforming from immature form to adult form.
- The Monarch population is dropped by over 90% in the last 30 years due to pesticide use and habitat destruction.
- You can switch to all-natural pesticides and herbicides to help the Monarchs.
- You can also plant a native species of Milkweed in your yard; making the perfect place for a Monarch to lay her eggs.
- In Vermont, you should start seeing Monarchs in mid to late summer.

The Monarch Lifecycle



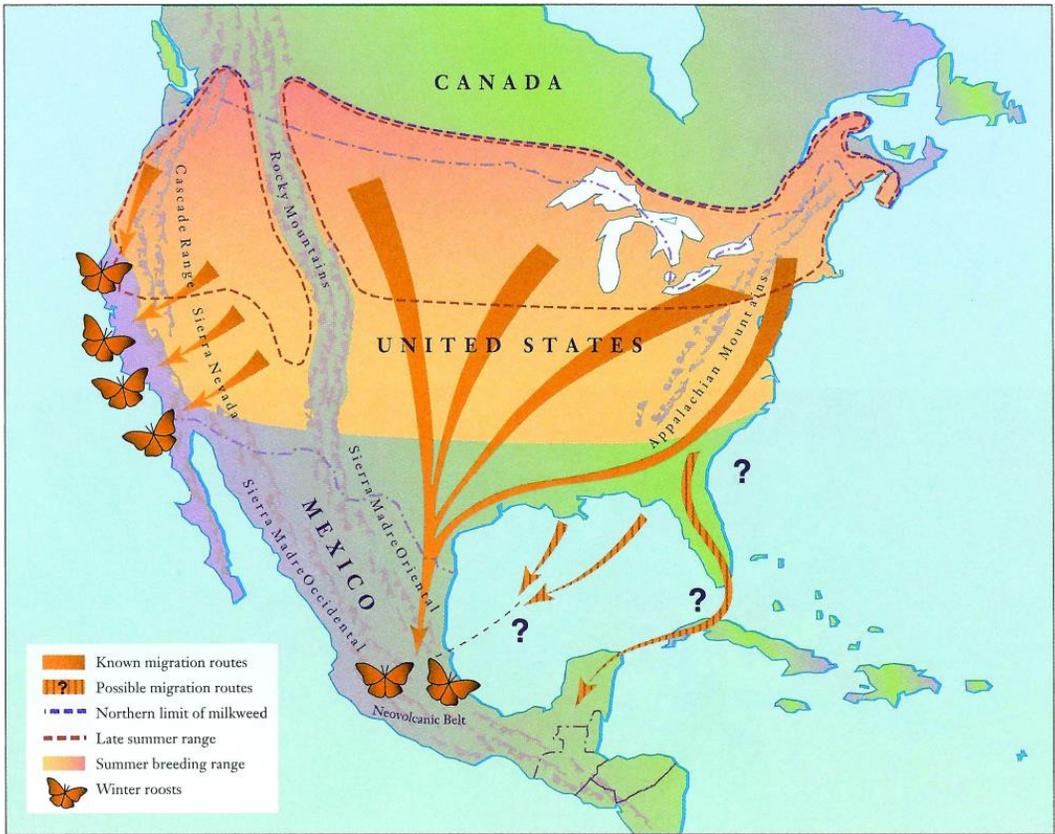
A Monarch egg on Milkweed.



Monarch caterpillar



A Monarch caterpillar has made a chrysalis and will soon emerge as a butterfly.



The Monarch butterfly migration map.



Monarch winter habitat in Mexico.