

Pinckard Monarch Butterfly Ranch

**Lazarus,
the
Monarch
Butterfly**



Written by: Hugh J Pinckard

Photos by: Hugh J Pinckard

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Written to share real life experience with my siblings, children, and grandchildren. Based on experiences encountered during the raising Monarch Butterflies.

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I'm just an Egg



First Days

One November day, my mother places me on the underside of a Milkweed plant leaf. Monarch Butterfly eggs are only laid on the Milkweed plant; however, there are around one hundred (100) varieties. I am only the size of the head of a straight pin. I will stay in my shell for one to five days (1-5). I will begin to grow and develop. As I grow, I will break out and the shell will become my first meal; as I will eat it before moving onto eating leaves.

Footnote: the day range is influenced by the climate. The warmer (76° and up) climate days are on the shorter side of the time period versus the cooler (75° and down) take longer end of the range.

Now I'm Larva / Caterpillar



Growing Days

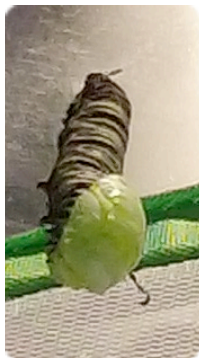
Leaves. The reason my mother laid my egg on a Milkweed plant is that is the only plant leaves that I will eat. At first, I am tiny only about one-eighth of an inch, I do not eat too much. Everyday I grow, my skin does not. I will split my skin; known as "molting" and wiggle my way out and then I will be very still giving my new skin to day. I will do this

five (5) also call
"instars". I am a
Caterpillar for nine to
sixteen days (9-16).

However, this is where
my adventure begins:



I was out in the butterfly
garden/flowerbed,
enjoying eating the
leaves. It sure was cold;
we Monarchs do not like
nor are we active at
temperatures colder than
about fifty degrees (50°).
The garden caretaker was
working in the garden and
found me. He cut off the
leaf that I was on and
brought me indoors and
placed me into their



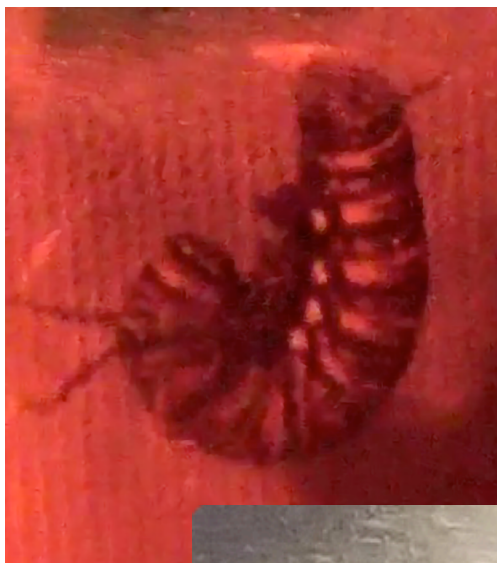
"Butterfly Habitat". It is nice, I have my own Milkweed plant to climb around and eat. Then I found out that I was not alone, there is another Monarch Caterpillar in here with me. I also have these people watching me from all sides and angles, like I'm in the zoo. I began wandering around and found my way out of the habitat. For the next three days I wandered, across the table top, down a table leg, onto and across the house floor. Wow, no leaves down here; what to do?

Sure enough as I am wandering the caregiver sees me and reaches down, picks me up, and I am rescued. Having been missing for three days; I earned a name change to "Lazarus". He puts me back in the habitat and right down onto a plump juicy leaf. I spend the next

few days eating, growing, molting, and just enjoying being a caterpillar.

Next, it is time to move onto the stage. I am going looking for a place to hang around, upside-down. This will be the "Chrysalis" stage of my life. Oops, I am off and wandering again, did I get lost again, oh my.

Wait a minute, look what I found, a wall. I climb the wall and find the top of the habitat. This looks like a great place to hang and transform into my Chrysalis. First I will spin a "silk button" to hang from the top. I start off curled and throughout the day I will begin to relax. I will get down to the form of a "J" where I will rest until the next day.



Chrysalis, just hanging around



Hanging Around

I have found the place to spend my next ten to fourteen days (10-14). I am in my "J" form, I now relax to hang straight. I split my skin, just as I do to grow during

my molting stage. Only this time, as I split my skin I will shake and vibrate to cause the skin to move upward and wad up above my body. Then I will wiggle until it falls away. Now to shrink down into my Pupa form. Shazam, I am now a Chrysalis. I am incased in this shape as my body develops and I go into my metamorphosis to come out as a Monarch Butterfly.



Emerging



**I am a Butterfly, Monarch that
is**

Emerging. The day has come for me to come out of my shell. I break the shell and climb out. I have a lot of work to do. My body is full of all of my fluids;



I now have to climb out, unfold my wings and pump all of the fluids into my wings. I will do this by wiggling and shaking my body. Once this is complete, I will hang and allow my wings to dry.



Now, I am hungry. I must fly off to find a flower with nectar. I will spend the next stage of my life flying around and eating. Normally between late October till mid November, we Monarch Butterflies spend our days migrating to the Sierra Madre



mountains in Central Mexico for what we call "Overwintering". We will gather on the oyamel fir trees, tens of thousands per tree.

I'm Back



Return Trip

During March, as the weather warms, we will begin our return migration. We will fly back north to our "summer homes", anywhere from south Texas all the way up to Canada. We will stop to eat nectar from flowers and as "pollinators" we will spread pollen from flower to flower as we travel.