

The Monarch's Long Trip



Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

A monarch butterfly begins life as a tiny egg on a milkweed plant. The mother lays her eggs there because milkweed is the only food her caterpillars can eat. After two to five days, a caterpillar hatches.

The caterpillar eats milkweed leaves and grows for about two weeks. Then it turns into a green and gold chrysalis. Inside, it changes. Six to fourteen days later, an adult butterfly comes out.

Most monarch butterflies live only two to five weeks. But in the fall, monarchs from the east of North America may fly more than 2,000 miles to reach the mountains of central Mexico. They can fly up to about 70 miles in a day.

There they spend the winter in fir trees. These travelers can live six to nine months.

1. What is the only food monarch caterpillars can eat?

2. What colors is a monarch's chrysalis?

3. What happens after the caterpillar has grown for about two weeks?

4. Why do you think the monarchs that fly to Mexico need to live longer than other monarchs?

Answer key

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1. What is the only food monarch caterpillars can eat?
Milkweed.
2. What colors is a monarch's chrysalis?
Green and gold.
3. What happens after the caterpillar has grown for about two weeks?
It turns into a chrysalis, and six to fourteen days later an adult butterfly comes out.
4. Why do you think the monarchs that fly to Mexico need to live longer than other monarchs?
Sample answer: the trip is so long, and the winter so long to wait out, that a butterfly living only a few weeks could not finish it.