

MONARCH BUTTERFLY KIT

Instruction Guide

READ THIS FIRST

~ to free your plant ~

- 1** Slide entire center unit out of the box.
- 2** Pull the lower cardboard door open to expose the pot and spray bottle.
- 3** Gently lift cardboard partitions off the plant.
- 4** Slide the pot out of the box.
- 5** Take your netted enclosure out of the white box, pop it up and set the plant in it. Zip the panel to secure it.
- 6** Now, relax, and read the tips section inside.



A FEW TIPS

to help make their journey a smooth one:

- The milkweed plant your eggs are on is a perennial plant called *Asclepias Incarnata*. It contains everything your Monarchs will need during their growth period.

- The netted enclosure containing your plant is extremely important. It protects the eggs/caterpillars from predators who want to eat them. Always keep the plant inside the enclosure.

- The plant will need to be watered every 3-4 days. There is a saucer to help with moisture retention. Do not over-water the milkweed.

- The plant needs to have sunlight. If you must keep it inside, do so only briefly and keep on a sun porch or in a well-lit area.

- One plant will sustain two Monarch caterpillars. They will eat every leaf and flower by the time they get ready to turn into a chrysalis. If you notice them getting larger with inadequate food, or notice more than two, call or text us at 336.687.1814 or email help@whimsicalwingsfarms.com to discuss options.

- When your caterpillar has eaten its fill, it will seek the highest position in the enclosure to make its "j". This is a very critical time in its development. Do not move or touch it! It will not survive any movement or handling at this point.

- Once the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis, let it set for a day to finish. Do not touch at any point. Then start misting it with fresh water from the spray bottle several times a day. Keep out of direct sunlight.

- In 6-10 days, based on humidity and temperature, you will notice your chrysalis becoming darker. It is turning clear, and softening, to prepare for the butterfly to emerge. The colors you see on the chrysalis are the wings of your butterfly.

- Once your butterfly emerges (watch for these emergences after a storm and usually around mid-morning) – do not touch or move it. Let it rest after birth for a day. Once its wings are strong and dry, place a sponge lightly soaked in Gatorade on top of the enclosure for the butterfly to nectar. Also, lightly mist the butterfly with water a couple times a day.

- After you've enjoyed watching your Monarchs for a day or so, take them out of the enclosure and set them free. Your milkweed plant can then be planted in your garden or in a container on your deck, where it will regenerate itself many times a season and every year, to feed generations of Monarchs for years to come.

- Don't be surprised to see your new Monarchs visiting the plant to lay eggs!

MONARCH BUTTERFLY

Life Cycle



1

Monarchs mate



2

The female lays eggs only on milkweed



3

The egg is very small - the size of a pinhead
Use magnifying glass



10

It takes 3 to 4 hours for the wings to fully dry

How do I see the small caterpillars?

Use your magnifier and watch for small holes in the leaves. There's a caterpillar nearby! They will soon be big enough to see very well without your magnifier.

The caterpillar is on the side of the netting or not moving.

This is okay. They could be molting or shedding their skin. They grow so fast they burst out of their old skin and grow new skin several times before they turn into a chrysalis.

What do the caterpillars drink?

The caterpillars don't need to be misted or get anything other than the nutrients in the leaves of the milkweed. Only when they turn into a chrysalis or butterfly do they need water from the mister.

Can the caterpillars see and hear?

The caterpillars rely on their sense of smell to navigate to the tastiest leaves on the plant. They don't see very well. But they can hear! If you notice when they are bigger and hear a loud noise, they will "jump."

Do the caterpillars and butterflies fight?

No. They can get in each other's way trying to get to the best parts of the plant, but they don't mean to be disrespectful to one another! They are gentle, loving creatures.



4

A newborn monarch caterpillar is the size of an eyelash



9

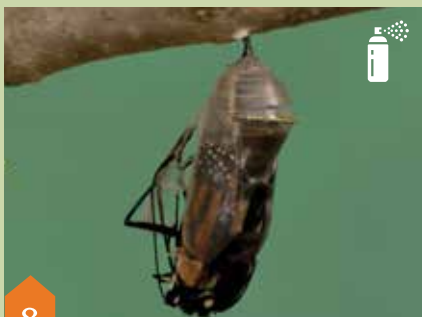
A monarch dangles from the empty chrysalis (may take a day)



5

Caterpillars grow rapidly and eat only milkweed

*Watch for holes in leaves!
Warmer = faster growth, no direct sunlight*



8

The butterfly emerges in 6-10 days
Mist 2-3 times per day



7

A newly formed chrysalis
Begin misting



6

Caterpillars form a "j" shape before turning into a chrysalis
No bumping!