

New! From Madison County Resource Education Program



Meet the Monarchs!

Look inside to discover why these little insects are a big deal in Madison County!

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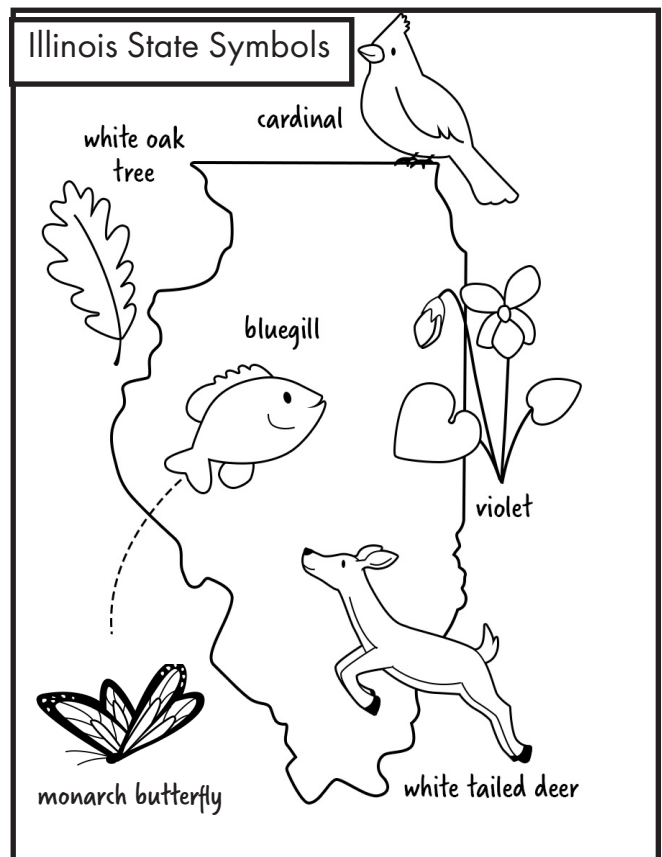
Written and illustrated by Eve Druke for the Madison County Resource Education Program.

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The State Insect of Illinois

Illinois has chosen some plants and animals to be its special **symbols**. The cardinal is the state bird and the bluegill is the state fish. The beautiful monarch butterfly is the state insect of Illinois. Look at the drawing. What other state symbols do you see?



The Monarch Is An Insect

A monarch has three parts: a **head**, a **thorax**, and an **abdomen**.

Like all insects, a monarch has six legs. A monarch has orange and black wings for flying. A male monarch has two black spots on his wings.

Monarchs use their front feet to taste their food.



Is this monarch a male or female? How do you know?

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The Monarch Changes As It Grows



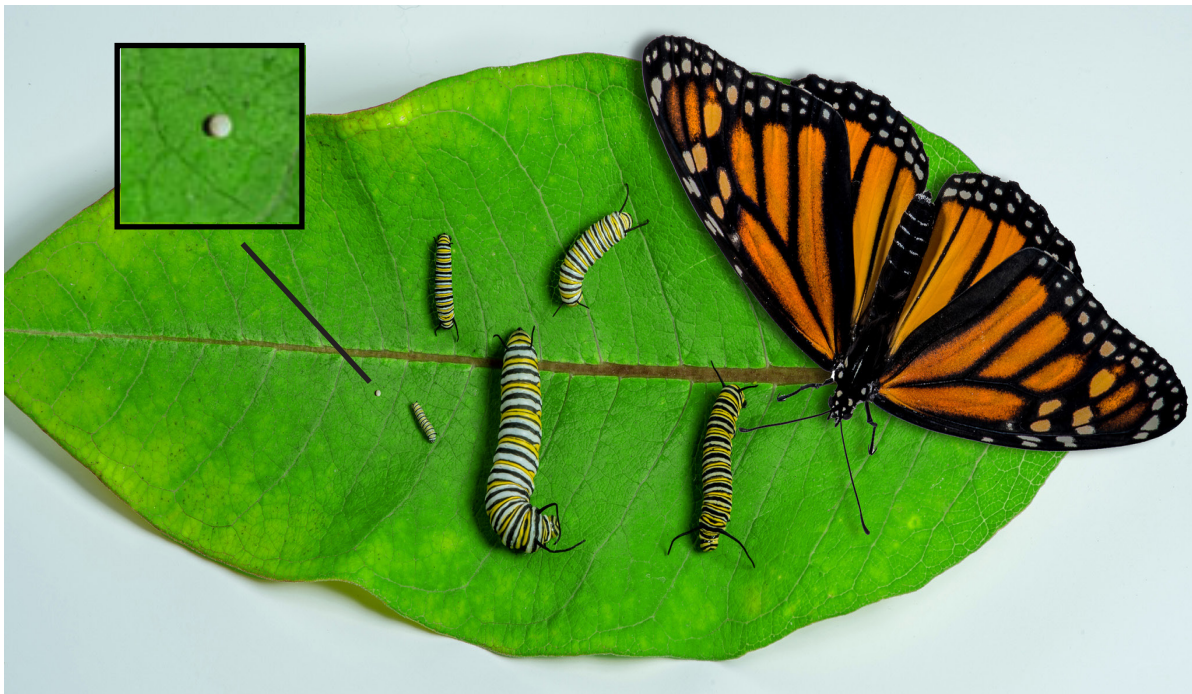
A baby caterpillar hatches out from an egg. The caterpillar eats milkweed and grows bigger. After a few weeks, the caterpillar makes a hard case called a **chrysalis** (kris a lis). Inside the chrysalis, the caterpillar changes into a butterfly. When it is ready...

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...a butterfly comes out of the chrysalis!



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A butterfly goes through many changes before it is an adult. Can you see the tiny egg on the leaf?

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Monarch Caterpillars Need Special Food

When monarchs are caterpillars, they can eat only one kind of plant. That plant is called a **milkweed**. A milkweed plant has sticky sap inside that looks like milk. Monarch mother butterflies lay their eggs on milkweed plants so the caterpillars can eat the leaves.



This caterpillar is growing bigger by eating milkweed. Milkweed is the only food monarch caterpillars can eat.

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When the caterpillars have turned into butterflies, they can fly to find their food. Flowers make a sweet fluid called **nectar** that is good food for insects. Monarchs can drink nectar from all kinds of flowers. Monarch butterflies look for flowers with bright colors like orange and red.

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Monarchs Migrate

When winter comes, monarch butterflies start to fly to a warmer place. When animals move a long way to stay warm, we say they **migrate**. Monarchs migrate from the United States to Mexico. In the spring-time, they will fly back north again.



These monarchs are flying to Mexico. Staying close together helps them keep warm and safe.

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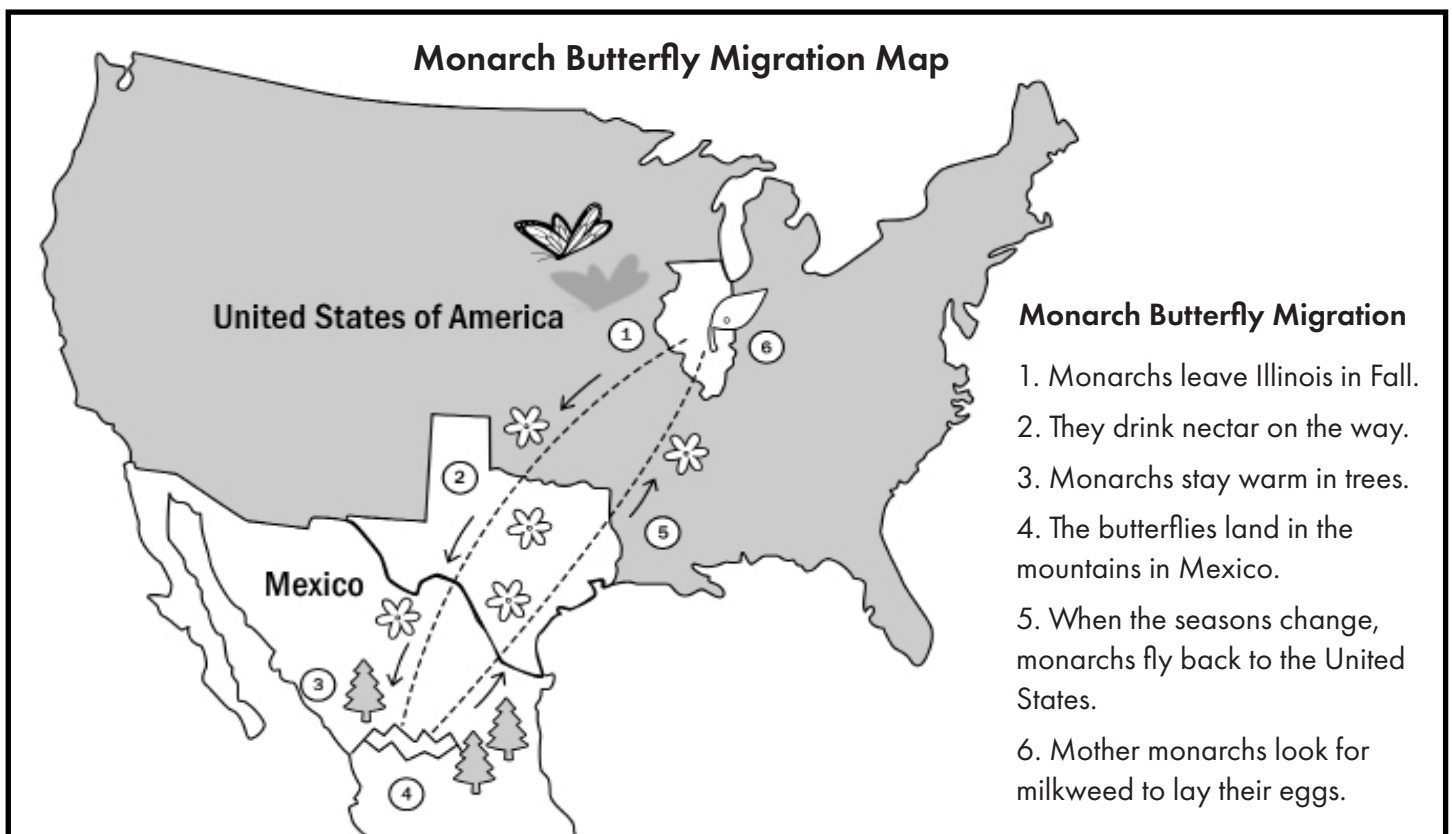


Illustration by Eve Druke

You Can Help Monarchs

You can help monarch caterpillars by planting milkweed in your yard. If you plant flowers with bright colors, monarchs will come to your yard to find nectar. Monarchs drink the nectar so they can fly a long way when they migrate.



A monarch sips nectar from the flowers of a milkweed plant. It uses a body part that is like a straw to suck up the nectar.

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Key Words

abdomen: the end part of an insect's body

chrysalis: the hard case around a monarch's body when it changes from caterpillar to butterfly

nectar: a sweet liquid made by many flowers

migrate: to move from one place to another to live

milkweed: a plant with sticky sap that looks like milk

symbol: a picture that stands for something else

thorax: the center part of an insect's body, between its head and abdomen

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Page 5, left: "Transformation of common tiger butterfly emerging from cocoon with chrysalis", by Sutisa Kangvansap.

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