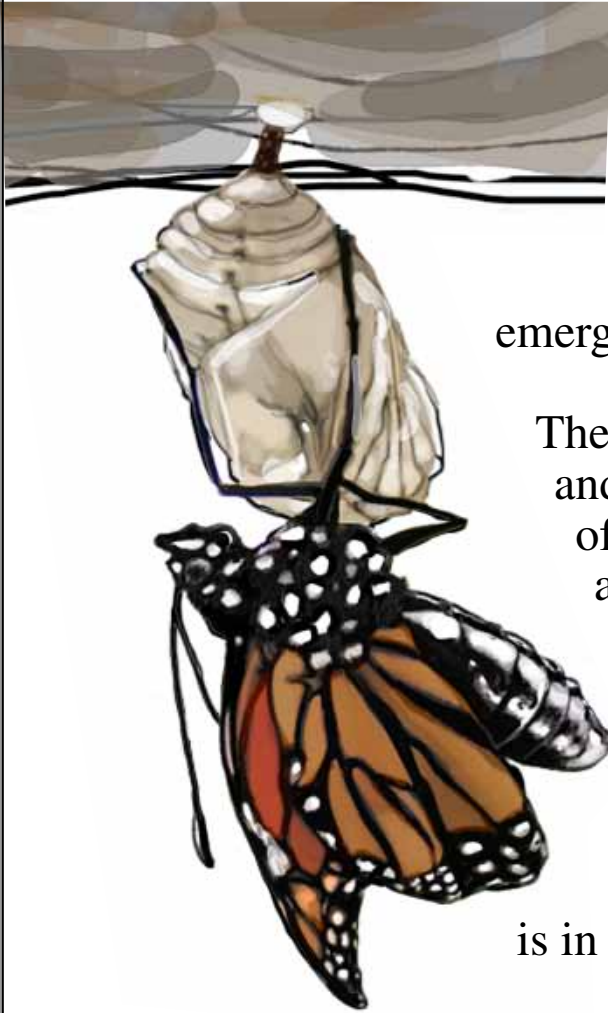


Monroe County Monarch Magic

The Monarch Butterfly Ecloses



After 8 to 10 days in the chrysalis, the monarch butterfly is ready to eclose—emerge from the chrysalis.

The exoskeleton of the chrysalis is weakened and the butterfly's legs push a long triangle of it outward, releasing its legs, proboscis and antennae. Grabbing hold of the old exoskeleton with its hooked tarsi (butterfly feet), the butterfly plops down releasing its wings and abdomen.

Its abdomen is large and swollen and the wings are tiny. The butterfly's proboscis is in two parts.

The butterfly knits the two sides of its proboscis together to form a perfect “straw” through which to suck nectar.

Contractions begin in the abdomen. The butterfly forces hemolymph (butterfly blood) out of the abdomen into the veins in the wings. The butterfly's exoskeleton is still soft and pliable so as the veins fill with hemolymph the wings expand. In a few minutes they are full sized butterfly wings.

The butterfly wings are damp and flimsy. It will be an hour or more before the butterfly's exoskeleton hardens enough that it can use its new wings, but the transformation is complete.