

Monroe County Monarch Magic

Egg Laying

Every monarch butterfly begins life as an egg laid on a milkweed plant. The female monarch uses her tiny front legs to taste the leaf before she lays her eggs. She will deposit one egg at a time and normally just one egg on a leaf, though there are exceptions. If there is not very much milkweed, or if the monarch is old or tired she may “load” a plant, laying one egg after another. A female monarch will lay between 400 and 1200 eggs during her 4 week life. Most eggs are laid on the underside of leaves near the top of the plant.

However many monarchs have their own style of laying eggs. If you find an egg laid on a flower bud or milkweed pod, chances are you will find more eggs laid by that same female in similar places. Usually young, fresh plants are preferred.

The eggs are a creamy color and about the size of a pin head. They are pointed at the top with ridges running up the sides.

It takes 4 days for the egg to hatch. They are tasty treats for many milkweed patch predators including spiders, mites, and lady bugs. Just before it hatches the black head of the growing caterpillar can be seen moving inside the egg.

