

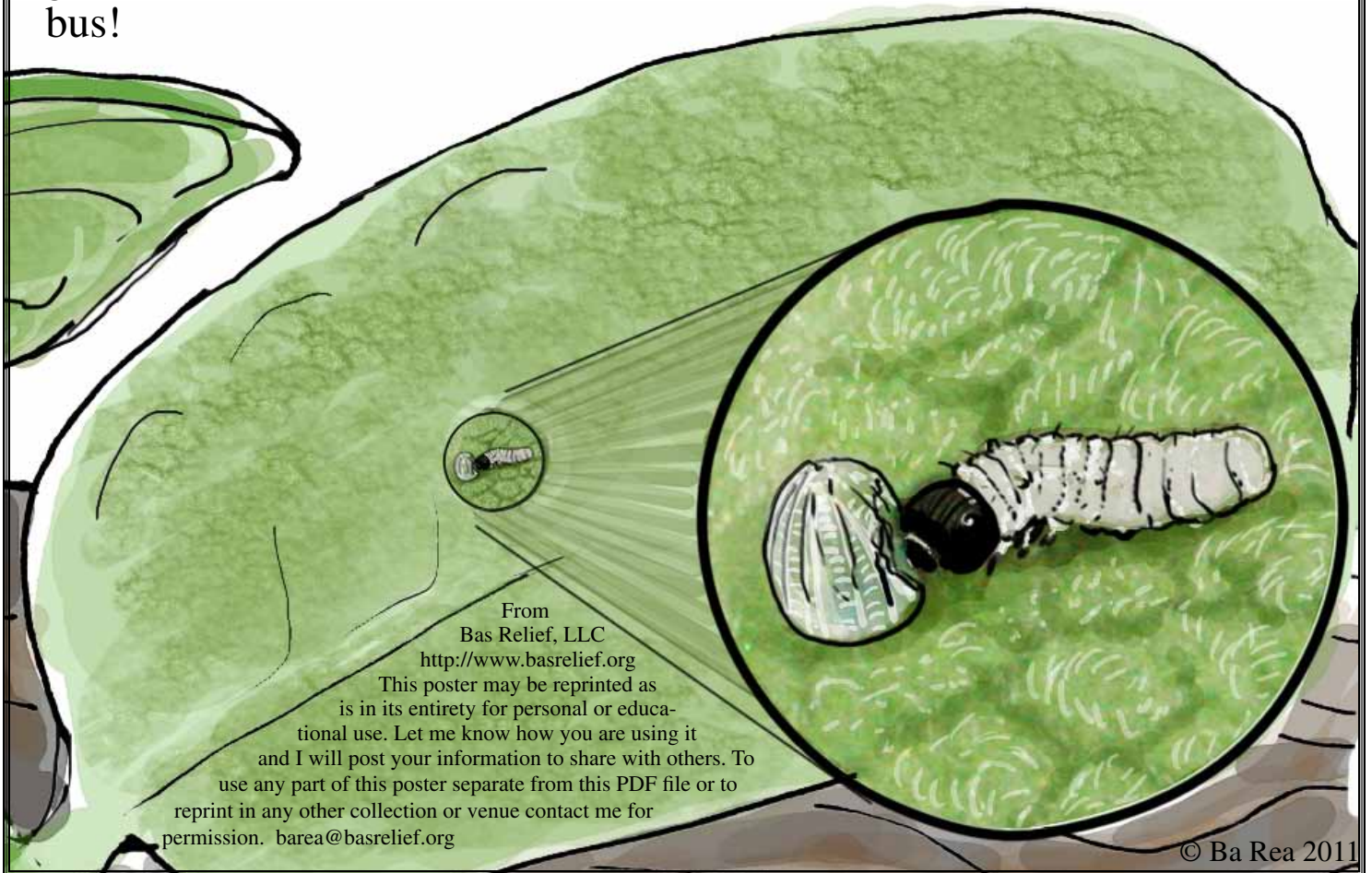
Monarch Magic

Hatching

It takes about four days for the caterpillar to be ready to hatch. When it is ready, it chews its way out of the egg shell. The nutritious yolk of a caterpillar egg lines the egg shell, so that is usually the caterpillar's first meal. The new caterpillar is tiny. It has a black head capsule and is covered in little, black hairs, called setae, which help it sense its world. Tiny nubs that will be its long, black filaments are barely visible.

From the time it leaves its shell, the caterpillar begins producing a silk thread from a spinneret under its head. It attaches the thread wherever it goes. This is a safety precaution. If the caterpillar is knocked off of its leaf, it can crawl back up the thread.

The caterpillar is the growing stage of the monarch. In two weeks it will be 3000 times larger than the day it hatches. If a second grader grew that fast at the end of two weeks she would be the size of a school bus!



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