

300 butterflies at MODS

4-6 days in pupa stage; eat egg casing for first meal – has all of the nutrition needed; do NOT eat the chrysalis

Life span 10-20 days in spring and summer months

Grow 2000 times its original size (2-3 inches) = eat a LOT of leaves; to raise them you would need a mini forest

Monarch caterpillars (native to Florida and most of the world) like milkweed plant to eat – have swallowtails too

zebra longwing – Florida butterfly

hide the egg on the bottom side of the leaf – to hide from predators and to protect from the heat of the sun

web a silk thread to protect themselves from falling – special gland to produce at the beginning and end of the cycle

walking = wave motion, insects have 6 legs caterpillars have 6 main ones and prolegs which are artificial legs; crunch up and expand forward to move – how hungry they are or how much food is available

from leaves get water and nutrients

butterflies move (4000 muscles in body); have grabby pads or even claws on their feet

caterpillars are similar to centipedes (arthropod group) but not the same family; centipedes are venomous and millipedes are harmless

butterflies and moths are from the same family **Lepidoptera** (“scaled wings”), bottom of the food chain

caterpillar in South America - hangs tail off the edge of a branch or leaf looks like a snake and people move away fearfully

protection = skin is smooth and silky soft, can also have spikes (depends on what they eat – like the monarch’s poisonous milkweed - and who their predators are – like the zebra longwing)

parasites use butterflies’ bodies as hosts for themselves

butterflies taste with their feet, sensors on their feet know the specific food for their type of butterfly

caterpillars camouflage/defend themselves to survive; color and behavior looks like green snakes; look like bird poop (brown and white spots); bad smell; spikes

metamorphosis – shed their skin like a snake; weaves a ball of silk like glue and dip feet in it to form chrysalis (they are immobile and can’t move so they are vulnerable to predators) – takes about 10 minutes; push body upwards while they are upside down and wiggle to get off the dead skin; takes about an hour for the chrysalis to “harden” – protection from rain and sun, camouflaged from predators (zebra longwing looks like a dried up brown leaf) – takes 10-15 days to turn from caterpillar to go to butterfly (metamorphosis)

as it is ready to emerge (upside down) clear and must be cracked open from the inside to emerge; vulnerable so must sit there for about an hour the wings will dry and then ready to eat and fly away; chrysalis disintegrates and drops to the ground

moth creates a cocoon (takes longer to develop) with a protective outer shell/butterflies a chrysalis

liquid (goo) leftover after the formation of the butterfly

butterflies are mostly located in tropical and subtropical areas (warmer weather since they lack protection from colder weather)

butterflies eat nectar, smooshed fruit (sugar sources) but not other insects