

Get to Know: The Monarch Butterfly

The Monarch butterfly is one of the most recognizable butterflies in Ohio. Look for signs of the Monarch from late spring to mid fall throughout the state.

How many caterpillars can you find hiding on this milkweed?

Milkweed is poisonous, making both the caterpillar and adult toxic to predators.

The Monarch is famous for its annual long distance flight to and from Mexico.

Milkweed is named for the color of its white, milky sap.

When a caterpillar is ready to make a chrysalis it will hang upside-down, in a J shape for around 24 hours!

Common Milkweed
(*Asclepias syriaca*)

For more visit:

www.FairfieldCountyParks.org



The Adult Butterfly



Use these tips to tell the adult male and female Monarch butterflies apart:

Typical Adult Wingspan:
3 to 4 inches

Colored orange, white,
and black.

Female

No black spot?
It's a female!

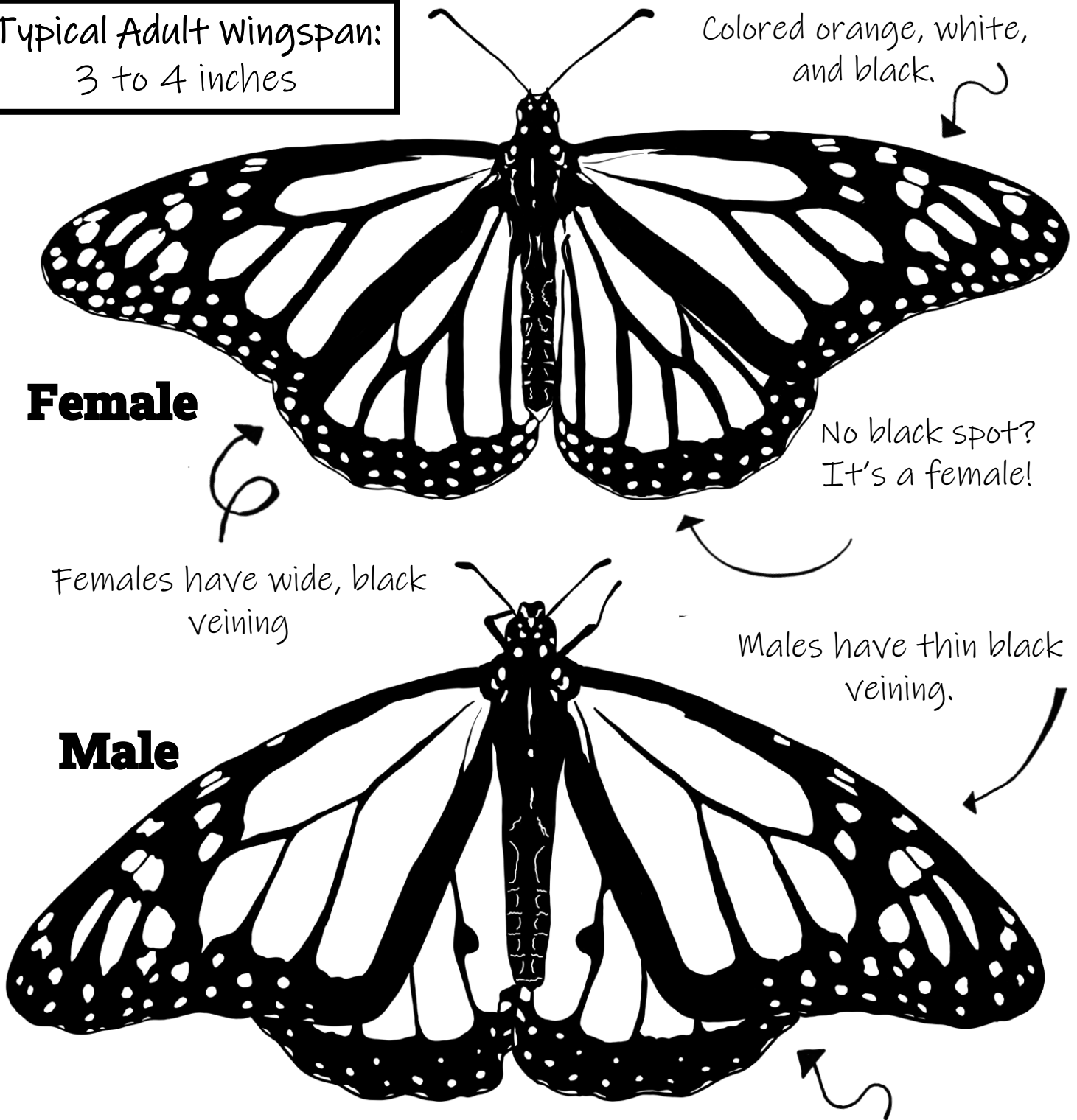
Females have wide, black
veining

Males have thin black
veining.

Male

Large black dot on
each hindwing.

These black dots are scent glands,
which help to attract a female.



Monarch Lifecycle



The Monarch goes through a process called *metamorphosis* to become a butterfly. There are four stages- the egg, larva, pupa and adult. It takes around a month (weather depending) to complete the cycle.

The Monarch caterpillar eats and grows for around two weeks.

When the caterpillar is full grown, it will hang upside-down, in a J shape.

Milkweed is the main hostplant for this species!

Caterpillar (Larva)

Chrysalis (Pupa)

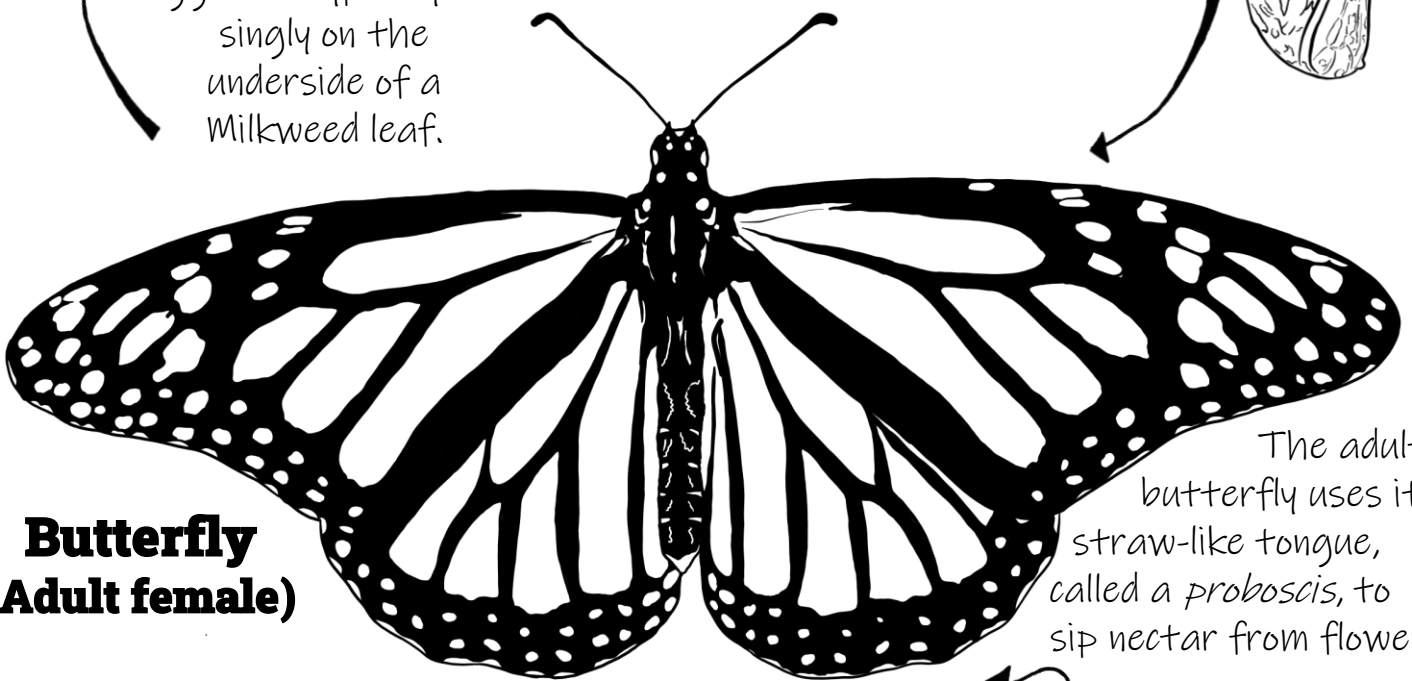
At first, the chrysalis is green. Then it begins to darken. Just before the butterfly emerges, you can see its orange and black wings!

Egg

Eggs are typically laid singly on the underside of a Milkweed leaf.

Butterfly (Adult female)

The adult butterfly uses its straw-like tongue, called a *proboscis*, to sip nectar from flowers.

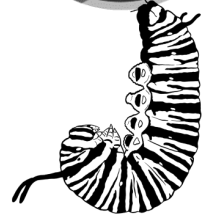


Plant a Pollinator Garden



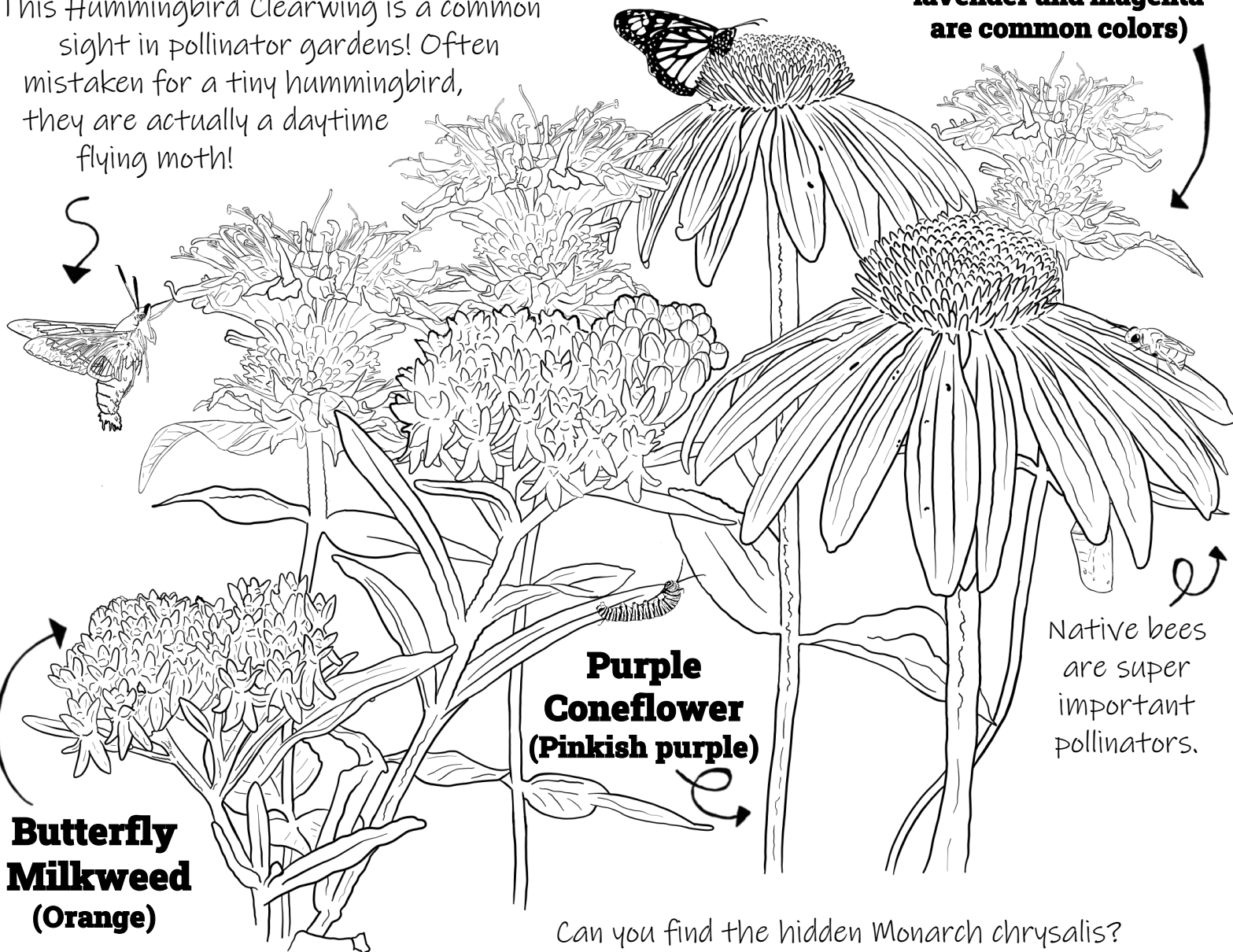
The best way you can help Monarch butterflies (and many other important insects) is to plant a pollinator garden. Here are some ideas for plant species to include:

- Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
- Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- Swamp Milkweed, for wet areas, (*Asclepias incarnata*)
- Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*, *Monarda didyma* and many others.)
- **ANYTHING NATIVE!!!** Do some research for your local area. Insects, especially pollinators, love native plants!



This Hummingbird Clearwing is a common sight in pollinator gardens! Often mistaken for a tiny hummingbird, they are actually a daytime flying moth!

Bee Balm
(Many varieties-
lavender and magenta
are common colors)



Native bees are super important pollinators.

Butterfly Milkweed
(Orange)

Purple Coneflower
(Pinkish purple)

Can you find the hidden Monarch chrysalis?