

# MALE & FEMALE MONARCH BUTTERFLY ILLUSTRATIONS

## HUMBER NURSERIES "GREEN THUMB GUIDE"

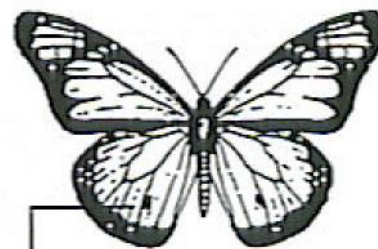


### HOW TO TELL THE BOYS FROM THE GIRLS



**FEMALE MONARCH**  
**NO DOTS ON WINGS**

The male Monarch Butterfly may easily be distinguished from the female by noting the two highly visible black spots on the insect's hind wings and the thinner black webbing within the wings. The female's webbing is thicker and she has no identifying wing spot as the male does.



**MALE MONARCH**  
**DOTS ON WINGS**

#### Mating Behavior

Mating of monarchs occurs mostly in mid-afternoon. The male patrols over an area where milkweed grows. When he spots a female, he flies after her and dives at her, directing her flight down to the vegetation. He may even hold onto her body with his legs and then glide down with her. Once she is landed, he may again fly over her, and then alight alongside and join his abdomen to hers in copulation.

Following this, the two may fly up to 75 feet high and over 300 yards away, the male carrying the female suspended from his abdomen. This flight usually ends high up in trees, where the two remain joined for as long as an hour.

#### Hair Pencils and Androconia

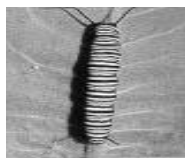
Male monarch butterflies have small pouches on their hind wings that contain scent scales called androconia and small brush like structures called hair pencils that can be extended from the tip of their abdomen. Both structures contain pheromones (male scent) used during courtship. The androconial pouches are visible as small swellings on the black veins of the hind wings, and they enable you to recognize males.

Hair pencils are extruded under pressure. They give off a dusting of pheromone onto the female when the male hovers over her in courtship.

#### Stage of Milkweed Butterflies - Monarchs



4 – 6 days



2 – 3 weeks



5 – 15 days



1 – 3 months

Common Name: *Monarch* Habitat: *Open fields, roadsides* Larval Food: *Milkweeds* Adult Foods: *Nectar*  
Flight Period (Broods): *South: All year (4 – 6), North: June – October (1 – 4)* Winter Stage: *Adult*

# The Story of the Monarch

Millions of Monarch butterflies spend the winter months ashiver but surviving in mountainous Mexican pine forests. As the earth tilts on its axis, the days begin to lengthen and spring weather creeps north at about 70 miles each day, the Monarchs leave their wintering roost and head north in search of their essential plants, Butterfly or Milkweed, all forms of Asclepias. The female begins her journey with a precious load of about 400 eggs and she seeks out Asclepias plants on which to lay them. She does not deposit an egg on just any plant or the first that she encounters but carefully visits a number of plants tasting them with her delicate feet. She is not being overly fussy but rather is counting them. When she is satisfied that there are enough such plants in the area then she begins to lay her eggs, confident that there will be ample food for her babies when they hatch into Monarch caterpillars.

This will be her last and crowning achievement as she is now becoming (for a butterfly) very old.

She would have been born in Southern Ontario or in some northern state or Canadian Province in August of the previous year and then made the incredible journey of 3000 miles south to Mexico to a place she has never seen, guided by instinct alone and will be 8 or 9 months old when she dies.

Her offspring born in Texas or another southern state continue the journey north, mating and laying eggs in a relay of generations until they reach Canada. It will probably be the grandchild that makes the return trip to Mexico in the fall.

## HELP OUT BY DOING YOUR PART

Much has been heard about the recent decline of the Monarch butterflies. Truth is, many butterflies, bees, songbirds and other native organisms are being pushed to the brink by multiple environmental and human induced factors. As a gardener, environmentalist, landowner or concerned citizen, you can assist and contribute positively to the recovery of these animals.

Firstly, adopt as many ecologically sound garden practices as possible when gardening in your yard. This reduces the need for chemical inputs and minimizes an organism's exposure to the adverse effects of such chemicals like pesticides.

Landscape with nature in mind! Beautifully designed and maintained yards can be achieved in harmony with nature, not working against it. Xeriscape in areas that have fast draining soils or receive little precipitation and plant hydric species (water loving plants) in drainage swales where water is seasonally or permanently present.

Lastly and importantly, utilize native plants in your landscape! They are better adapted to the local conditions, are typically hardier and provide shelter and food for wildlife and their offspring.



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# ✠ HUMBER NURSERIES Ltd.

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