Monarch

Danaus plexippus

Biology

The **Monarch** butterfly is best known for its incredible migratory abilities. In the fall, they travel from North America to Central Mexico. They spend the winter in colonies located in the forested mountains of Michoacán. The same butterflies start heading north in march. Not all of the populations migrate: Central and South American populations, as well as some in North America, are non-migratory. **Monarchs** are also found as far as Hawaii and Australia. They depend on the milkweed (genus *Asclepias*), from which the larvae derive their chemical protection (toxicity), which is then passed on to the adults. The development from egg to adult takes about a month.

Host Plants

Milkweed	*Asclepias* spp.
Milkvines	*Metalea* spp.
Climbing Milkweed	*Sarcostema* spp.

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Viceroy

Limenitis archippus

Biology

The **Viceroy** is sometimes mistaken for the **Monarch** due to its similar color pattern. The species is distributed throughout North America and Central Mexico. Females lay eggs one by one near the tip of host plant leaves from which the caterpillars sequester salicin (similar to aspirin) for chemical protection. In north Florida, young larvae overwinter in shelters constructed out of dry leaves (→). Both, larvae and pupae, are cryptically colored, with the larvae resembling a bird dropping. Adult **Viceroys** and **Monarchs** form a Müllerian mimicry complex, in which both chemically-defended butterflies work together to instill unpleasant memories of their wing pattern in predators.

Host Plants

Willows	*Salix* spp.
Poplars and Cottonwoods	*Populus* spp.