Our late summer monarchs migrate all the way to Mexico, but they do not return to us. Flying partway back in early spring, they stop to lay eggs and die. The new generation of butterflies completes another leg of the journey. Finally, the third or fourth generation of adult monarchs arrives here in May or June.

Be an at-home naturalist! Discover and explore the outdoors with our Critter Cards.

LOOK 🦋
Turn over a milkweed leaf to find tiny, oval-shaped monarch eggs. Later, search for the jade green, gold-banded pupa, or chrysalis, hanging on the underside of a leaf. Finally, watch monarchs fly and feed on nectar-rich plants in open fields or meadows until early fall.

Protected from Predators
Monarch caterpillars are not harmed by the poisonous milkweed they eat. Stored milkweed toxins in monarch butterflies keep predators from eating them!

Cool Parts
Monarchs "smell" with their antennae and use the hairs on their legs and feet to taste. They drink nectar with a long tongue, or proboscis, that functions like a drinking straw.

A Long Journey
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TRY IT
Wrap yourself in a sheet or towel and pretend to be a caterpillar in an egg. Hatch, feed, stretch, shed your skin, and eat some more. Repeat this process four times, then wrap up in the towel to form a chrysalis. Say "meta-morpho-sis" and emerge as a butterfly!

Source: massaudubon.org; farmersalmanac.com

Photos by Chaffee Monell and Lisa Hutchings