

Butterfly Information

Monarch Butterfly = *Danaus plexippus*

Distribution: Extensive

New Zealand's most recognizable and identifiable butterfly is the Monarch butterfly - *Danaus plexippus*.

Found: In gardens nationwide

The Monarch butterflies are found in many places around the world, even so the Monarch is considered a New Zealand native because it became established here on its own

Life Cycle: Monarch butterfly just 28 to 32 days to complete its life cycle.

Food: Milkweed is the host plant (caterpillar food) for Monarch butterflies

Measuring Monarchs

Average monarch forewings are about 50 mm long
Forewing length is measured from where it attaches to the thorax to the tip, or apex, of the wing

Laying Eggs

Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on Swan Plants which are Milk Weed plants to ensure that they are able to begin feeding as soon as they have emerged from the eggs

Eggs are generally laid on Milkweed plants on the underside of the leaves separately.

Eggs are a creamy colour when laid and change colour by deepening to yellow before hatching.

Females lay between 300–400 eggs at a rate of about 40 per day.

How to distinguish between a male and female Monarch Butterfly?

To distinguish between the two sexes in a Monarch you need to look at the hind wings.

The male has two black-colored oval markings on his hind wing which the female does not have.

