

a voice
for the natural
landscaping
movement



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Celebrating natives
plant and natural
landscapes
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Bringing Up Monarch Baby!

Next Generation
By Elaine Swanson

Monarch Baby and Butterfly Box are geared toward
elementary and middle school level children.

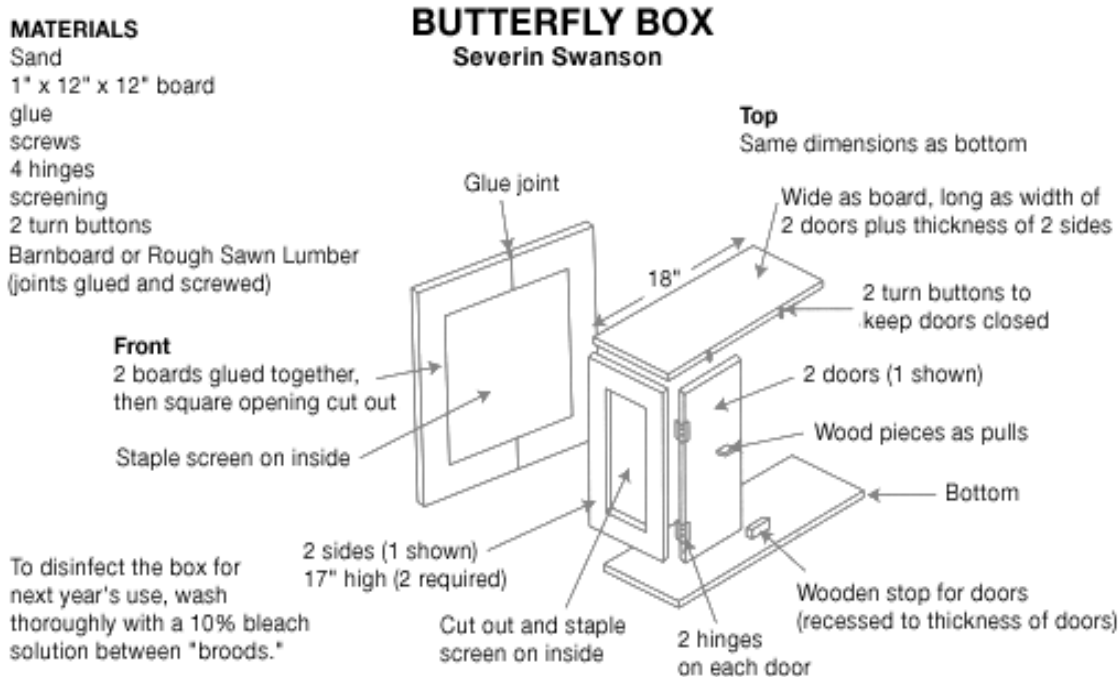


1. Search for Monarch caterpillars where patches of common milkweed grow. You will need to return to the patch in order to provide fresh milkweed leaves for the caterpillar. The distinctive Monarch caterpillars, glossy black and white and yellow, are usually found on the undersides of the leaves.
2. Collect one or more caterpillars in a plastic jar protected from the sun.
3. Bring home several fresh milkweed stalks which will provide the fresh leaves the caterpillar needs for food.
4. Bend one of the stalks so it fits upright into your butterfly box. (Do not set the stalk in water, as the caterpillar may fall in and drown.)
5. Every 1-2 days, remove the leaves and replace with fresh ones. Also remove the frass (droppings) that fall to the bottom of the box.
6. When the caterpillar is about 2 inches long, it is ready to form its chrysalis. It will do this by hanging in a J shape from the top of the box or one of the branches you have provided.
7. After 1-2 days hanging upside down, the caterpillar will shed its exoskeleton and change into a beautiful jade-like jewel (chrysalis) with golden spots.
8. Between 1-2 weeks, depending upon temperature and length of day, the Monarch butterfly will develop within the chrysalis. The remarkable changes from caterpillar to butterfly are complete when the chrysalis becomes transparent, and the orange and black wings of the Monarch can be seen.
9. If you are very lucky, you will have a chance to watch the Monarch gradually emerge. The chrysalis skin will split open, and the butterfly will break free into the fresh air. A butterfly birth!
10. The wings will be damp and crumpled at first, and the Monarch will need 1-2 hours before its wings and body have reached their full size. The butterfly will flex its wing muscles and practice uncoiling its proboscis – the delicate tube used for drinking nectar.
11. If your Monarch has a black spot on the upper surface of each rear wing, it is a male. The spots are scent glands and attract females for mating.

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12. Now you can carry your box outdoors, offer the butterfly your finger, and release it to your garden of wildflowers. A good time to take pictures!
13. With a sense of adventure and the spirit of curiosity, you can take time for one of our quiet yet radiant resources – the butterfly!



Elaine and Severin Swanson are long-time members of Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter of Wild Ones.

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