

Monarch Butterflies



Have you ever seen a butterfly with orange, white, and black markings? That may have been a monarch butterfly! Monarch butterflies are beautiful. They are also important.

Monarch butterflies often can be found near flowers. They feed on the nectar those flowers make. While they go from flower to flower eating nectar, they also pollinate the flowers. Because of this, those flowers can grow new seeds. Then those seeds can grow into new plants! So monarch butterflies are important pollinators.

Many monarch butterflies live in the United States and Canada. But they make a very special trip in the winter. The butterflies that are born late in the summer travel to Mexico and Southern California. That trip can be up to 3,000 miles long! That's a far way to go for an insect. The butterflies make this trip to get away from the cold weather. They go to the same forests

every year. Some scientists say that up to a billion butterflies go to the mountain forests of Mexico each year!

The number of monarch butterflies has gone down a lot over the past twenty years. Problems in their environment can make it hard for them to survive. For example, there has been a loss of milkweed plants. Those are the plants that monarch butterflies lay eggs on. Cities and farms have gotten rid of a lot of milkweed. Hot, dry weather has hurt milkweed, too. All of this hurts the monarch butterflies.

The forests of Mexico where butterflies go for the winter have also been shrinking. People have cut down parts of the forest. Changing weather has hurt the forest as well. This puts the butterflies at risk.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the text, what might be a butterfly with orange, white, and black markings?

- A. a milkweed plant
- B. a monarch butterfly
- C. a Mexican butterfly

2. Monarch butterflies pollinate flowers while they go from flower to flower eating nectar. What can the flowers do because monarch butterflies pollinate them?

- A. The flowers can grow new seeds.
- B. The flowers can make more nectar.
- C. The flowers can travel to Mexico.

3. Monarch butterflies can't survive in cold weather. What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. "Many monarch butterflies live in the United States and Canada. But they make a very special trip in the winter. . . . The butterflies make this trip to get away from the cold weather."
- B. "For example, there has been a loss of milkweed plants. Those are the plants that monarch butterflies lay eggs on."
- C. "The forests of Mexico where butterflies go for the winter have also been shrinking. People have cut down parts of the forest."

4. Read these sentences from the text.

The number of monarch butterflies has gone down a lot over the past twenty years. Problems in their environment can make it hard for them to survive. For example, there has been a loss of milkweed plants. Those are the plants that monarch butterflies lay eggs on. . . .

The forests of Mexico where butterflies go for the winter have also been shrinking. . . . This puts the butterflies at risk.

What inference can you make about the number of monarch butterflies?

- A. Fewer milkweed plants and smaller forests of Mexico mean a smaller number of monarch butterflies.
- B. More milkweed plants and larger forests of Mexico mean a smaller number of monarch butterflies.
- C. Changes in milkweed plants and forests of Mexico do not change the number of monarch butterflies.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Monarch butterflies are beautiful butterflies with orange, white, and black markings, and they go from flower to flower eating nectar.
- B. Monarch butterflies that live in the United States and Canada travel every winter to forests in Mexico and Southern California.
- C. Monarch butterflies are important for flowers, but the number of monarch butterflies has gone down because of changes in their environment.