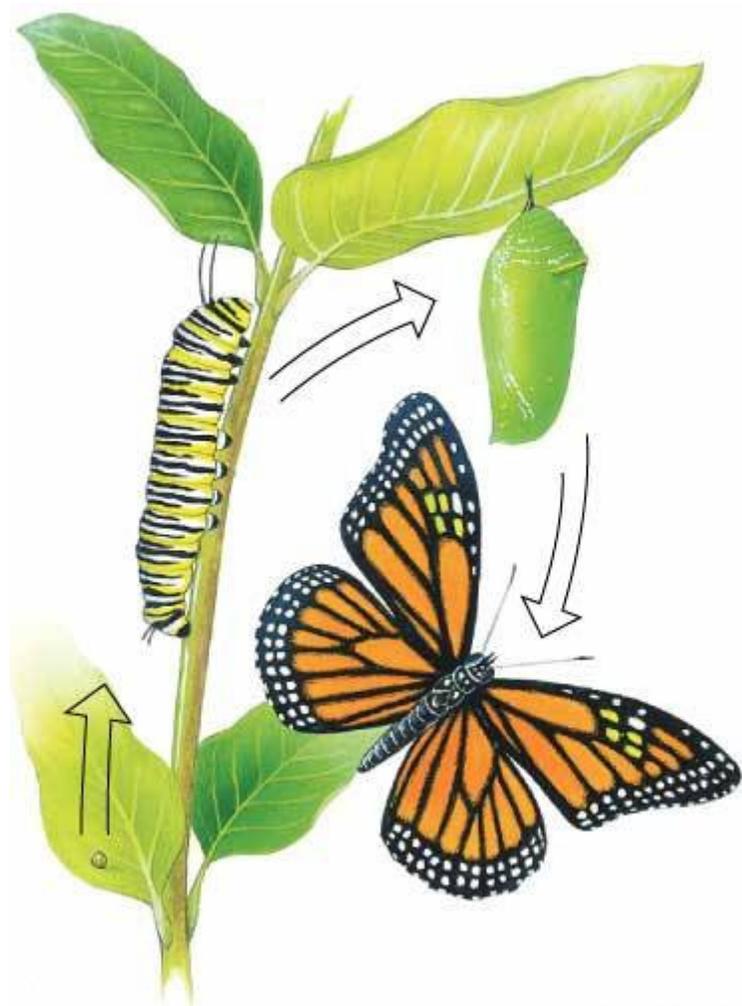


Metamorphosis

The word metamorphosis means change or transformation. Insects are champions at change. Some insects - grasshoppers are an example --hatch as miniature adults and just grow larger. Others, like moths, butterflies, dragonflies and ants, are more dramatic; these insects begin life as an **egg**, hatch into a **larva**, rest and transform as a **pupa** and emerge as an **adult**.



The **larva** (often called a caterpillar) is designed for eating and growing. A silkworm spends about 23 hours a day eating; during the first 3 weeks of life, it increases its body weight 86,000 times!

The function of the adult is to attract a mate, produce eggs and start the process again.

The actual transformation is performed during the **pupa** stage. All the old body tissues are disassembled and rebuilt into a new form, the **adult**.

What is the value of metamorphosis? At each stage of its life, the insect can concentrate on a single purpose. Adults may occupy a totally different habitat from the larvae. The adults eat different foods - in fact, some adults never eat at all. Metamorphosis allows insects to escape from temporary habitats before conditions become unfavorable for survival.