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The CATERPILLAR'S Log

Markings:

Other unusual features:

Can you work out their species from a book or on the internet?

Attach photo or field sketch

Can you record where and at what time of year you see the most caterpillars in your garden?

Do they seem to have a favourite plant?

Cool Facts

Butterflies and moths spend their childhood as a caterpillar. This is called the larval stage.

They outgrow their skin and shed it several times.

They use a silk thread from their silk glands to spin a protective cocoon for their transformation.

They only have one job - to eat!

They have as many as 4,000 muscles in their bodies - that's packing a real punch for such a tiny creature!

They have 12 eyes!

They have six legs, like an insect. The other legs you can see are false prolegs which help them to climb and balance. They will lose them when they become butterflies.

Many use the toxins from their host plants to make themselves taste horrid to birds and other predators - clever!

Do It Today! Here are our instructions to build your own caterpillar house:

- Get a clear plastic box or tank with a close-fitting lid.
- Line it with fresh leaves - preferably from the plant where you found your caterpillar. Soft, tasty leaves like dandelion and lettuce are also good.
- Hold a stick out in front of your chosen caterpillar and he will climb onto it. Rest the stick into your box or tank and let him walk along it, into the box.
- Feed the stick into the box so he has something to climb on and eventually to hang his cocoon from.
- Poke a lot of small air holes into the lid (ask your mum, dad or guardian to help) and place it on the box with care or your caterpillar will escape.
- Please don't use a metal lidded container, as spiky edges around the air holes can hurt your caterpillar's feet. Place the box in a shaded place - make sure it won't get too hot.
- **As long as you keep your caterpillar, make sure he is happy by supplying him with fresh leaves every day.**
- Don't put water in the tank - he may drown in it.
- Clean out any waste (called *frass*) or mould with a cotton bud or piece of bathroom tissue, and if the air seems dry, mist it just a little with a water spray bottle to keep it humid.
- If you are lucky, in a little time he will wrap himself into a cocoon. Don't disturb him if he seems still or slow - he may be starting to transform. If he forms a chrysalis, hooray - be patient and you will have a butterfly to set free. Some butterflies hatch in two weeks, others may stay inside all winter and hatch in the spring - you will have to wait and see. Make sure he will have enough space to climb out of the chrysalis and dry his wings when he hatches. Gently shift the stick so he hangs in a clear position if you think he needs more room.
- Check him every day, and when he hatches be ready to film him or take a photograph. He won't eat while his wings are drying, but after a few hours he will want to be set free to fly - take your box outside, let him walk onto your finger and place him on plant. Take more photos! Then see him try out his new wings and set off to enjoy his new life as a butterfly!

My Butterfly Field Notes:

Observe your newly hatched butterfly, or a butterfly you find, in your outside space & use this area to make your notes

Location: _____

Time: _____

Date: _____

Links of wonder:

Want to find out more about caterpillars? Here are a couple of our favourite sites:



Wildlife Trust
<https://www.wildlife-trusts.org/wildlife/how-identify/identify-caterpillars>

The website of the UK
Butterfly Monitoring
Scheme
<http://www.uk-bms.org/involved.aspx>



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