

Monarch Butterflies



By Paulette



Dr.Hunter

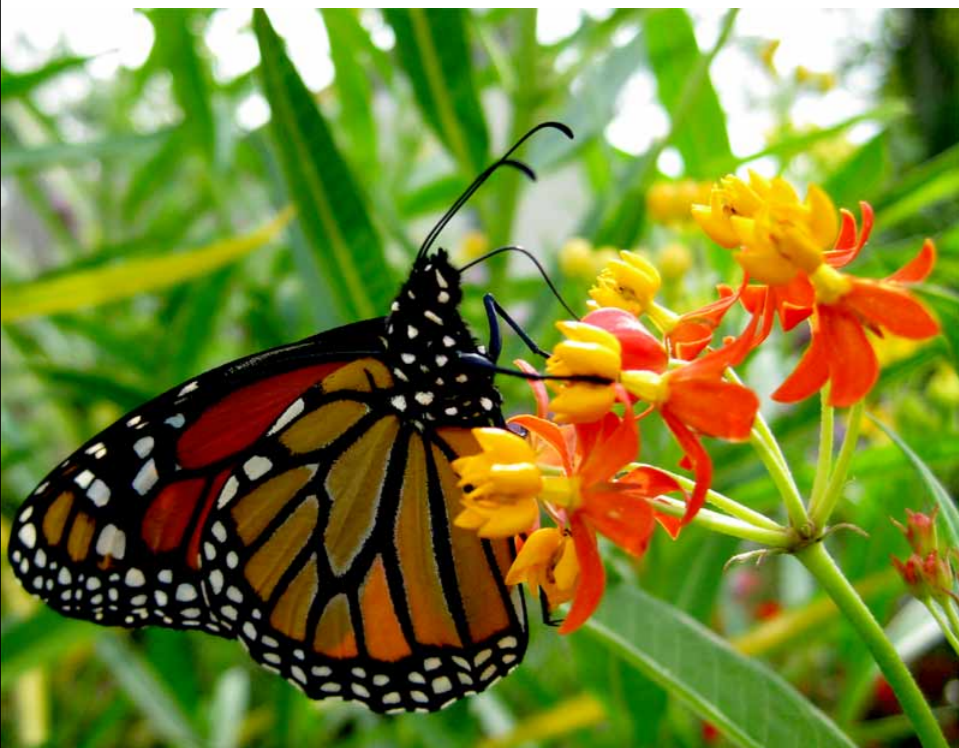


Dr. De roode

Dr. Hunter and Dr. De roode have discovered something amazing. Dr. Hunter studies at University of Michigan. Dr. Hunter and Dr. De roode have discovered something butterflies do. Some butterflies are infected and some are non-infected. The infected butterflies go to the tropical milkweed and the non-infected goes to the swamp milkweed.



One third of the monarch butterflies are infected with a common parasite OE, which causes disease. They weaken and die by paper wasps. Hunter from Michigan working with Dr. De Roode noticed monarchs self-medicate. A female monarch butterfly laying eggs on a tropical milkweed.





The only plant infected female monarchs laid their eggs on were the tropical milkweed which have cardenolides that are poisonous to the protozoans hurting the butterflies. Monarchs aren't helpless against this foe.



So when the monarch butterfly mother lays her eggs on the tropical milkweed, her larvae hatch and begin eating the plant. And because the caterpillars ingest cardenolides as part of every meal, any Protozoa infecting them will be poisoned and die.

