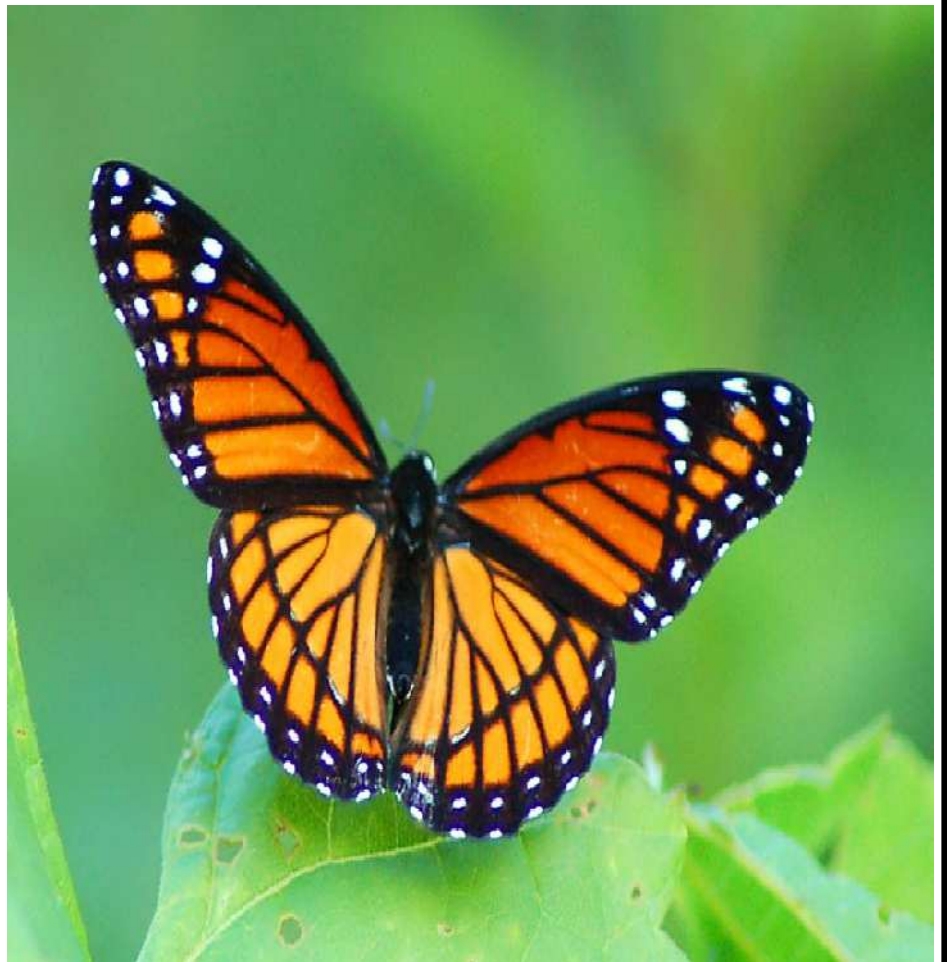


Animal Facts:

Butterflies

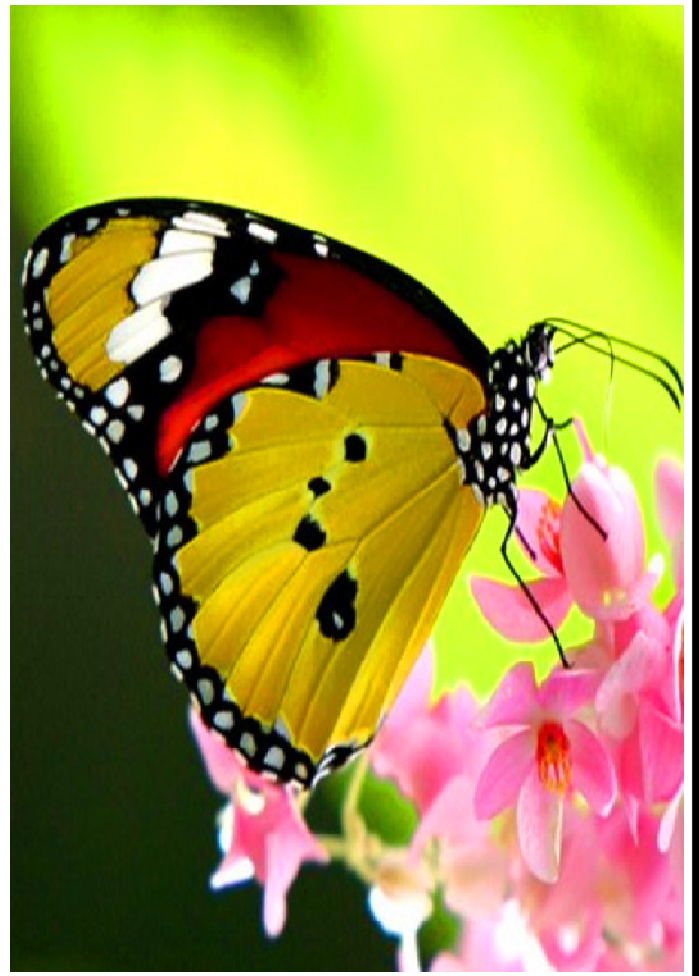
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Butterflies are insects with four large wings that feed either on the nectar of flowers or on fruit.



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Together with moths, butterflies make up the scientific order Lepidoptera - the word means scaly wings. There are more than 165,000 species of Lepidoptera - 20,000 butterflies and 145,000 moths.



Many butterflies are brightly coloured and fly by day. They have slim, hairless bodies and club shaped antennae (feelers).



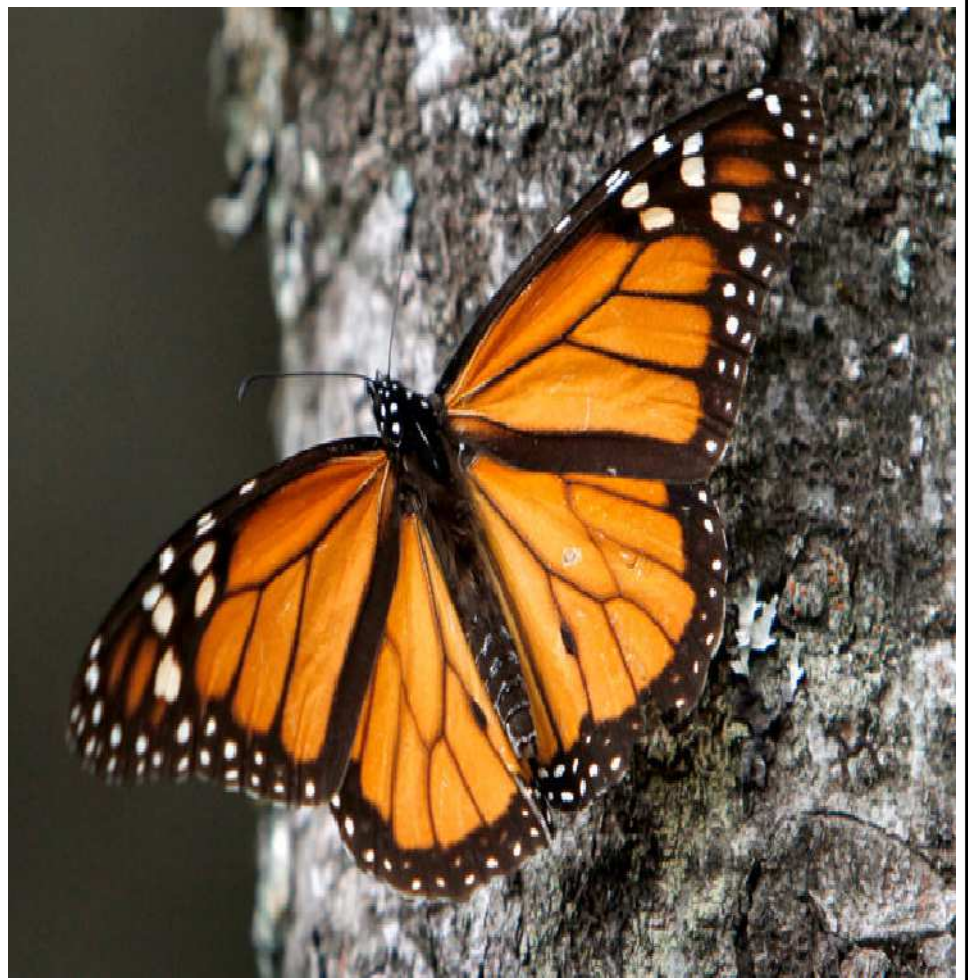
The biggest butterfly is the Queen Alexandra's birdwing of the New Guinea, with 25 cm wide wings. The smallest is the Western pygmy blue.



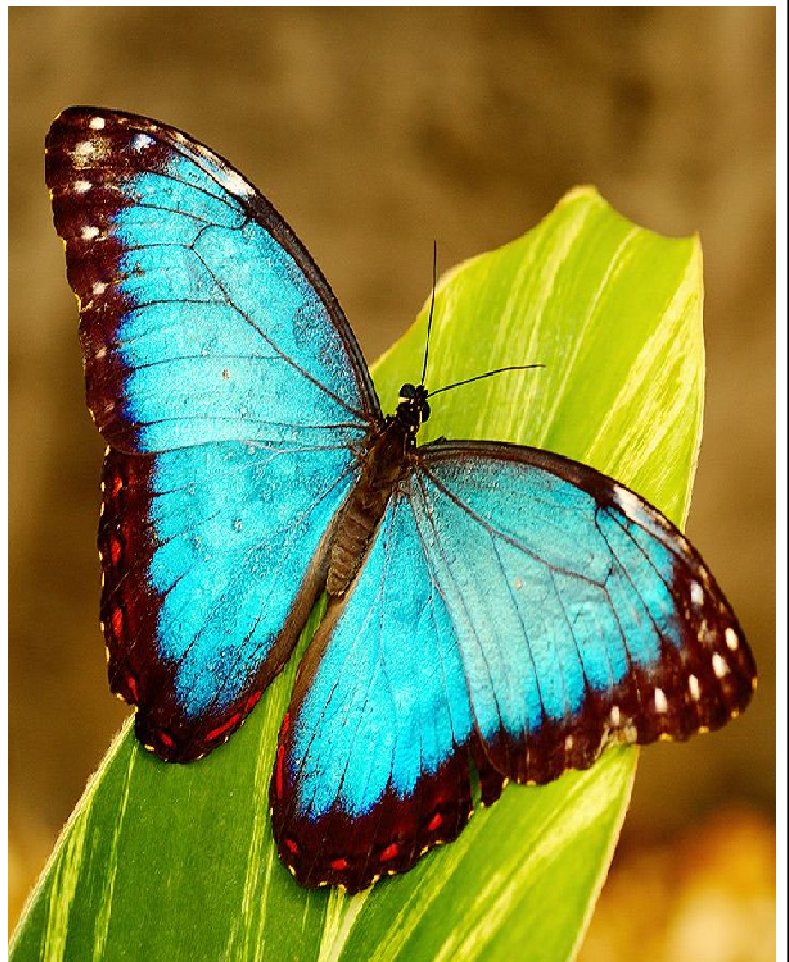
Butterflies can only fly if their wing muscles are warm. To warm up, they bask in the sun so their wings soak up energy like solar panels.



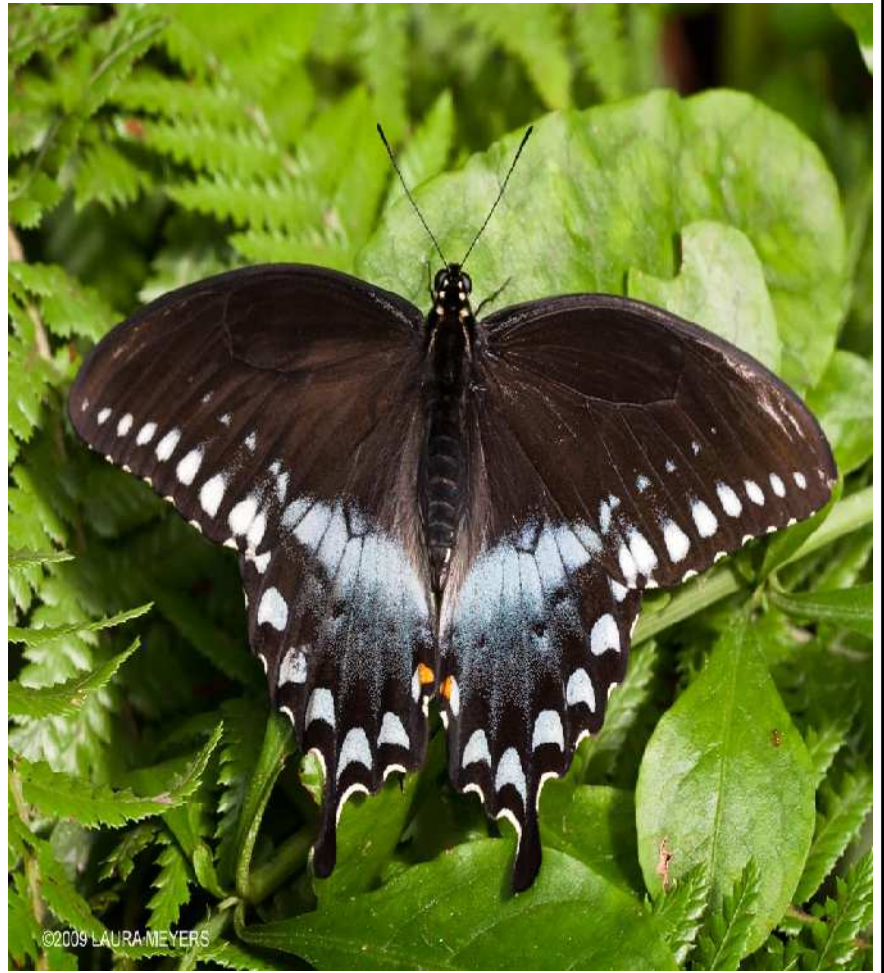
The monarch butterfly is such a strong flier it can cross the Atlantic Ocean.



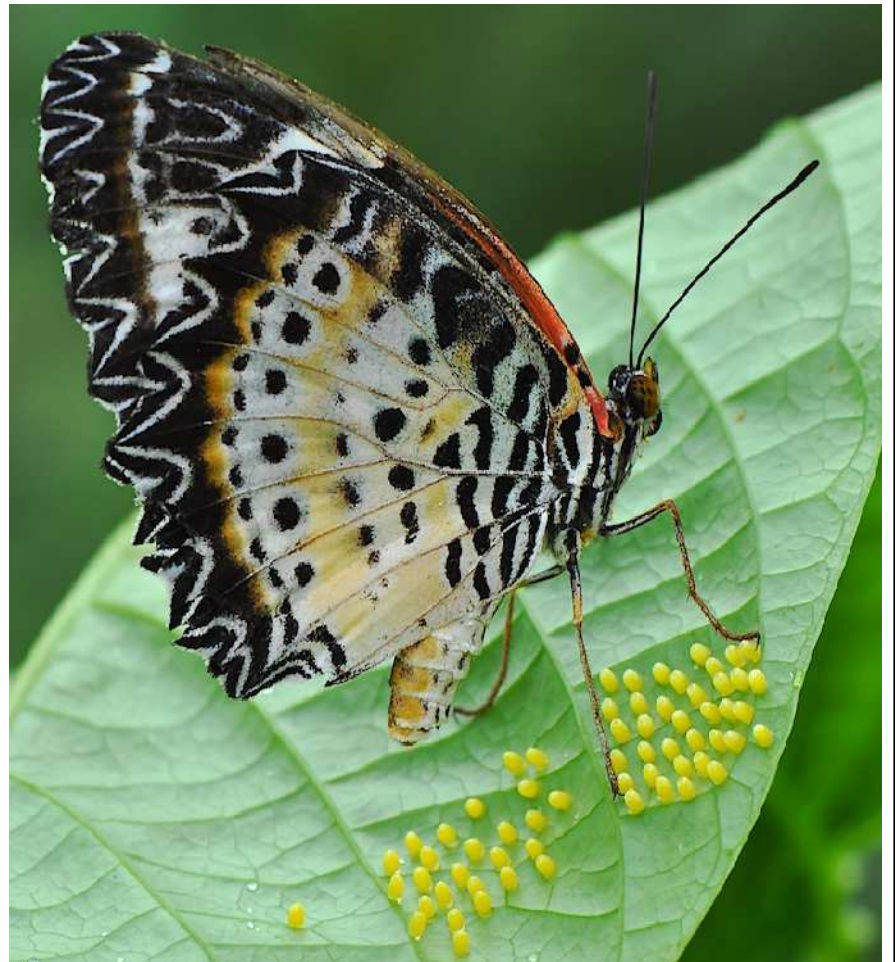
The shimmering blue wings of the South American morpho butterfly are very beautiful - in the 19th century millions of the butterflies were caught and made into brooches.



Most female butterflies live only a few days, so they have to mate and lay eggs quickly. Most males court them with elaborate flying displays.



Butterflies taste with their tarsi (feet). Females stamp on leaves to see if they are ripe enough for egg laying.



Every butterfly's caterpillar has its own chosen food plants - different from the flowers the adult feeds on.

