

Rearing Caterpillars

Objectives: Students will learn

- To identify the different species of butterflies.
- About food plants of butterflies and moths.
- Different stages in the life cycle of the butterfly/moth.
- To develop sensitivity towards nature.

Background: Knowledge about the life cycle of a butterfly/moth and comparison with lifecycles of other insects.

Subject: Science

Approach: Observation and research

Material Required: Plastic Jar (with holes made in the lid), food plant of the caterpillar, data sheet, pen or pencil.

Method:

1. Ask the students to locate and collect a caterpillar on any garden plant.
2. Then let them take a clean, wide-mouthed plastic jar (double the size of a jam jar) and make some holes in the lid, which will allow air to enter into the jar.
3. Ask them to place the caterpillar inside the jar with a few leaves of its food plant. They should feed the caterpillar every day with fresh leaves and take efforts to clean the jar every day.
4. Within a few days, they will find their caterpillar growing big and a day will come when it will stop feeding and start wandering restlessly. They may also observe a change in the body colour and this is the time when they should provide some dry stems or twigs, which will be used by the caterpillar for pupation.
5. Soon they will find a pupa attached to the twig, within which the caterpillar's body is shaping up into a butterfly.
6. Within a week, they can see the pupa getting darker and the glimpses of future butterfly begin to show. They may be thrilled and surprised to see one morning, a beautiful butterfly inside their jar.
7. Ask them to release their butterfly and enjoy the moment when it takes off into the air. They can record their findings in the format given ahead.

Life History Data Sheet

Name of the Butterfly/Moth	Common Name: Latin Name:
Name of the food plant on which the caterpillar/egg was collected	Common Name: Latin Name:
Type of the food plant (Tick off the correct option)	Tree/Shrub/Herb/Climber Evergreen/Deciduous/seasonal
Description and size of the Egg/Caterpillar (from the day of collection till the day of pupation)	
No. of feeding days of the caterpillar	
Did the caterpillar moult?	Yes/No. If yes, then how many times? Was the moult eaten? Yes/No
Elaborate on the feeding habits of the caterpillar	
Did you notice any defense mechanisms in the caterpillar?	
Description and size of Pupa/Cocoon	
Place of pupation	
No. of days spent in pupation	
Time of emergence of butterfly/moth	
Did the caterpillar or pupa survive till the last stage?	Yes/No If No, what are the reasons? Please elaborate
Description and size of the adult that emerged	
Any photographs or illustrations, please attach to the report	Yes/No
Any other observations	