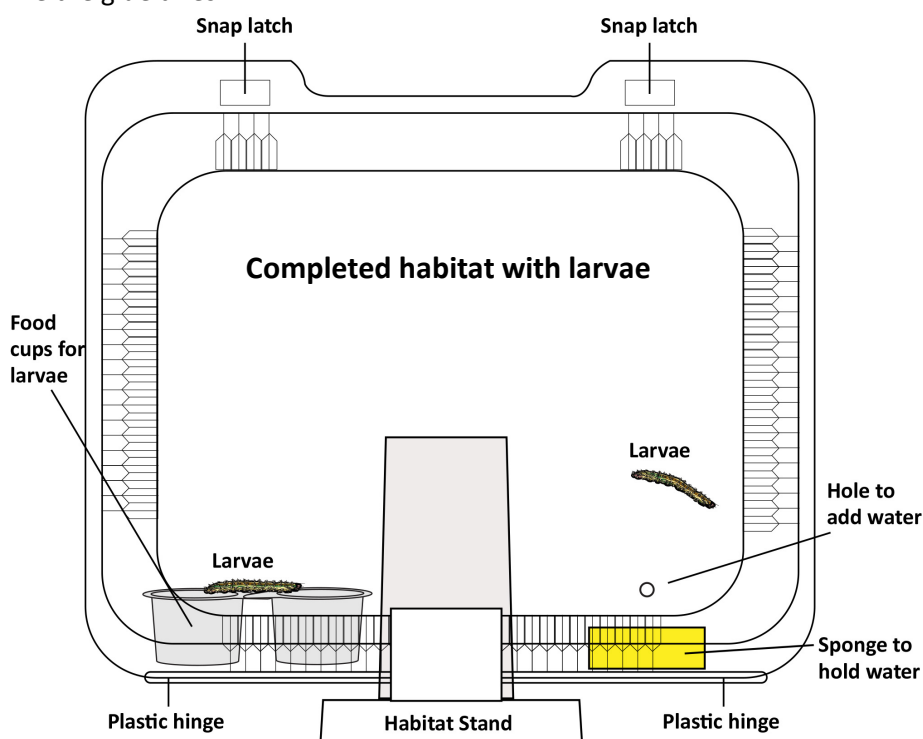


## ANIMAL CARE OF LARVA AND BUTTERFLIES

### PROCEDURE

- Follow the instructions on the provided prepaid coupon from Carolina Biological Supply Company to order the butterfly larvae and food. **It is best if the delivery date is mid-week** to make sure you and your students are able to get the larva and their food moved into the chamber upon arrival.
- Create the larva growth habitat and habitat stand **prior** to the arrival of the larva (**see Activity 2 for complete instructions**). Prepare the stand first. The habitat will need to have two washed, disposable coffee creamer cups, and a 4-cm x 4-cm sized sponge placed inside. Cups will be glued as shown but the sponge will not need to be glued to the habitat.

*Avoid using plastic glue because fumes could damage the larva.* Use the stand to hold the closed box upright while the glue dries.



**Teacher only:** To make a clean hole in the habitat wall, use a butane lighter to heat the tip of an ice pick. If you use a candle or match, soot will accumulate and blacken the hole rim on the habitat. If an ice pick is not available, use a small iron nail or a knitting needle. (**see Activity 2 for complete instructions**)

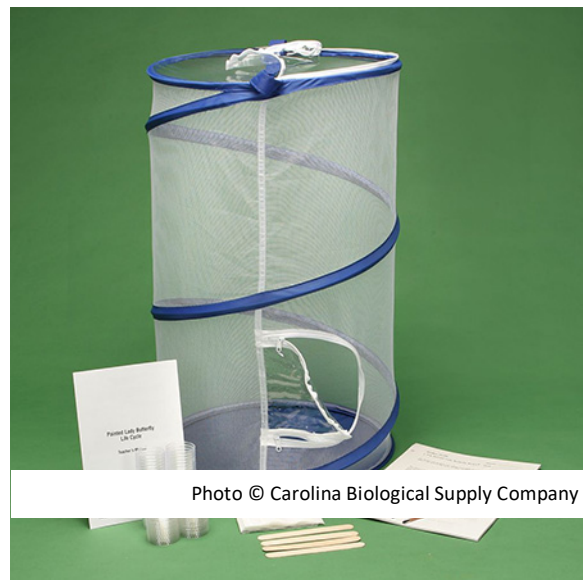
When the larvae arrive, use the soft paintbrush to gently move the larva to the chamber. Transfer lumps of food from the shipping container to the cups with the craft stick. Touch only one end of the craft stick; use the other end for food transfer.

### SAFETY

- Neither the food nor the larvae are harmful but careless handling of the larva can injure them. Direct contact of skin with the food can lead to mold growth on the food.

### DAILY CARE: LARVA

- Use the craft sticks to move food from the shipped food container(s) to the small food cups. Fill the small food cups about half full. Refrigerating the food container, ~~which~~ will keep it the food fresh longer. Check the food cups in the habitat periodically and add more food if necessary. If refrigerated, let the food return to room temperature before feeding.
- Every day or two, have the students insert a water-filled pipette into the hole and drip some water on to the sponge to increase the humidity of the chamber.
- When larva climb to the top of their chambers and remain there, chrysalis formation will take place shortly thereafter.
- After the larvae are safely inside their chrysalises, remove them and relocate them to the mesh Butterfly Sanctuary from Carolina Biological Supply Company. **Be sure to orient the chrysalises in the same way they are oriented in the larva growth chambers.**
- A tape loop can be used to hold the chrysalises to the “ceiling” of the butterfly sanctuary. The chrysalises must hang downward for metamorphosis to properly occur.
- **Tip:** If possible, cut the plastic box around the place where the chrysalises are attached and tape the plastic with the chrysalises to the ceiling of the mesh butterfly sanctuary.



### DAILY CARE: ADULT BUTTERFLIES

- When the butterflies emerge, a reddish liquid will be released. This a waste product and not blood. The butterflies are fine but the liquid, called meconium, is messy. To control the mess, place some paper on the bottom of the sanctuary and remove it when all butterflies have finished emerging.
- Put a small disposable Styrofoam™ or paper plate holding a slice of orange citrus fruit on the butterfly sanctuary floor. The butterflies will feed on the orange juice. Change out the orange slice every two days.
- Branches or plants such as mallow or milkweed (butterfly-garden plants from garden shops) can be placed inside the sanctuary. Besides looking nice, they will provide the emerging adult butterflies a place to land and possibly to lay eggs for the next generation.
- The butterflies will need some time to pump out their wrinkled wings before flying.
- If the air in your classroom is dry, use a spray bottle to spray water on the mesh sanctuary to increase the humidity inside of it.

- If any butterflies escape from the sanctuary, they can easily be captured and returned. Wait until they land and gently surround them with the fingers of your hand. If the butterflies flutter around the ceiling lights, turn the lights off and wait for the butterflies to descend to where they can be reached.
- Save the empty chrysalises for examination by the students with their magnifiers. If available, place several chrysalises inside plastic Petri dishes to protect them during examination.
- The adult butterflies will last for about 10 days to two weeks. Dead butterflies can be saved and mounted for examination of their wings. Detailed instructions for mounting butterflies can be found on the Texas Agricultural Extension Service website.

<http://www.butterflywebsite.com/articles/tamu/mountbutter.html>

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#### **Image Resource**

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[https://www.carolina.com/butterfly-kits/painted-lady-life-cycle-biokit/143990.pr?intid=jl\\_pdp&jl\\_ctx=on\\_site#](https://www.carolina.com/butterfly-kits/painted-lady-life-cycle-biokit/143990.pr?intid=jl_pdp&jl_ctx=on_site#)