



## **PAINTED LADY BUTTERFLY**

### **KIT AND INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **Before you begin**

Butterflies do not have an immune system at any stage of their development, so everything must be kept very clean. Hands should be washed well before handling containers. Please keep out of direct sunlight at all stages of development, as they can overheat.

#### **Caterpillar Stage**

The caterpillars are 5 to 7 days old when they arrive. They will spend their entire larval stage in their food containers. They are eating a special scientific diet, consisting mainly of soy and wheat, with added vitamins and minerals.

You will notice there are times when the caterpillars are very active and times when they are quite still. When they are inactive it may be a sign that they are shedding their skin. They are especially vulnerable at this time and the containers should be handled gently. You may notice quite a bit of webbing inside the containers during the second week, this is perfectly normal. The length of time for this stage of development depends on the temperature in the room. Warmer speeds up development cooler slows it down. Expect the caterpillar stage to take an additional 8 to 14 days after the caterpillars arrive. When the caterpillars are ready to pupate, you will notice them hanging from the paper in a J shape. Within 24 hrs you will have a chrysalis.

#### **Chrysalis Stage**

When the last caterpillar in a container changes to form a chrysalis, wait a further 24 hours before removing. If you need to leave the chrysalides in the container for a few days, that's fine, it won't hurt them.

If you have the netted butterfly cage, place the cage so that the clear plastic window is at the top of the cage. The bottom and sides of the cage will be netting. Remove the Chrysalides by gently pulling them away from the paper. Next, place them inside the bottom of the cage, around the edge. If you have the large cage, it can be turned to a vertical position once the butterflies have all emerged.

If you are using a terrarium type container, pin or tape the paper holding the chrysalides inside the top of the cage, so they are hanging. This method can also be used for the netted cage if you prefer. It is normal for the chrysalides to shake when disturbed. This response will change from time to time. Don't worry if they do stop this response, they are still fine.

Because indoor air can be dry, it is important to spray the chrysalides with a fine mist of water at least three times a day. It won't hurt them to skip the misting on the weekend if they were misted during the week. Please make sure the spray bottle is new and has never contained any chemicals. Again the length of time it takes for this stage of development depends on temperature, expect about 8-14 days.

## Butterfly

About 24hrs before your butterflies emerge you will notice the chrysalides turn very dark.

On close examination you will see speckles of orange which are the wing colours showing through. Once the chrysalides have turned dark, just mist around the cage, not directly on the chrysalides as they lose their water-proof protection when they turn dark. Butterflies will most often emerge in the morning. When they emerge their wings will be crumpled. The newly emerged butterfly will be able to grip the netting and climb up the side of the cage to hang. Butterflies must hang and dry their wings or they will be unable to fly. Shortly after a butterfly emerges it will release a red liquid, don't be alarmed it's just butterfly waste and will diminish over the next few days. The butterflies will enjoy being misted a few times a day with water

To feed the butterflies, place a round slice of orange in the cage, or use a Gatorade soaked paper towel or cotton balls, and change daily.

Be sure to use a full sugar Gatorade, the butterflies need the sugar for energy.

The butterflies will not eat for the first 24hrs after they first emerge.

Please keep the cage out of direct sunlight.

## The Release

The children will enjoy observing the butterflies for a few days or so, then it will be time to release them. They will live for about three weeks as adult butterflies.

When you release the butterflies, make sure it's a nice warm day, they won't fly below 16c or in the rain. Watch out for birds. If you see a flock of birds in the air, just wait until they pass, many birds will eat butterflies!

## Cleaning and returning the mesh cage:

Once the butterflies have been released, spray the cage with a mixture of mild detergent and water, let soak for a few minutes, then rinse well.

Make a solution of 1part bleach to 10 parts water and spray over cage. Let soak for a few minutes, then rinse. The cage will be clean and sanitized. When dry, it can be folded flat.

The cage must be return to EcoNova. Please send us an email to : [info@econova.ca](mailto:info@econova.ca) to organize a drop-off.

Thank you!

## A NATIVE AMERICAN LEGEND

If you desire a wish to come true, you must first capture a butterfly and whisper that wish to it.

The butterfly will carry your wish to the heavens. As the butterfly makes no sound, its voice cannot be heard by anyone but the Great Spirit.

Who will grant your wish as a reward for setting the butterfly free to return to him.



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