

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

Season 1, episode 25

There is a girl named Hannah. Hannah lives in the state of Texas in the southern United States. Hannah is a curious child. She likes to learn. Hannah's mother is Ericka. Ericka is very patient. She listens to all of Hannah's questions. When she can answer the question, she answers it. When Ericka doesn't know the answer to Hannah's question, she reads books with Hannah to find the answers.

Right now, Hannah is very interested in insects. She spends hours in the yard watching the small insects. She watches ants that walk in a line. She watches bees that collect pollen from flowers. She watches crickets that jump through the yard. She watches mosquitos that bite and suck blood.

One day Hannah is in the yard. Suddenly, an incredible insect lands on a flower. Hannah knows it is an insect because it has six legs, its body has three parts and there are two antenna on its head. This insect also has two pretty wings. Its wings have many colors. Hannah is fascinated. She wants to know more about this pretty insect. Ericka is working in the yard, so Hannah yells to her mom, "Mom! Come here!"

Ericka walks to Hannah and looks at the insect. "Mom, what is this insect called?" Hannah asks.

"It's a butterfly," Ericka responds.

"What do butterflies eat? Where do they live? How many species are there?" Hannah asks.

"I don't know. Should we go to the library?" Ericka responds.

"Yes!" Hannah exclaims. Hannah likes the library a lot. The library has books with information about everything. Ericka and Hannah go to the public library. When they arrive at the library, they talk to the librarian.

"Good morning. Welcome to the library. Can I help you with something?" She says.

"Yes. I would like books about butterflies," Hannah responds.

The librarian guides Hannah and Ericka to a particular section of the library. "We have several books on insects with information about butterflies, we have a book about the varieties of butterflies, and we have a book about the great migration of monarch butterflies." The librarian takes the books and hands them to Hannah.

"There is a butterfly migration?" Hannah asks the librarian.

“Yes, and the migration passes through Texas. Here in the library garden we plant flowers for the monarch butterflies. The butterflies drink the nectar from the flowers,” the librarian responds.

Hannah and Ericka go home with the books from the library. Hannah reads everything about butterflies. She learns that there are 24,000 species of butterflies in the world.

Hannah opens the book about the monarch butterfly migration. The monarch butterfly is a pretty butterfly with orange and black wings. Hannah learns that the monarch butterflies live in Mexico, the United States, and Canada. She reads that every year there is a great migration of butterflies from Canada to Mexico. There is a map of the migration. In the map, Hannah sees that the monarch butterflies pass through Texas on their migration.

Hannah keeps reading and learns more. She learns that there are several generations of butterflies. The first generation is born in Mexico and flies north. This generation stops in states like Texas to lay their eggs. The second generation of butterflies is born in Texas and other states and flies further north. The third generation or the fourth generation fly south to Mexico to hibernate. The butterflies that fly to Mexico sometimes are bigger than normal monarch butterflies.

Hannah keeps reading and learns that there is a problem. Climate change is affecting the monarch butterfly migration. There are groups that work to protect butterfly habitat to make more flower fields, especially milkweed. Milkweed is important because monarch butterflies lay their eggs in milkweed.

Hannah is fascinated. She wants to help the monarch butterflies. She explains to her mom that she wants to help the butterflies and Ericka makes a plan.

Ericka and Hannah make a special space in their yard. In the space, they plant milkweed. Every day Hannah checks the milkweed. She wants to see the monarch butterflies!

One day, Hannah goes outside to check the milkweed and she sees a monarch butterfly. Then she sees another butterfly, and another. They are very pretty! When the monarch butterflies leave, there are little eggs on the milkweed. Every day Hannah checks on the eggs. She doesn't want another insect to eat the eggs.

Finally, little caterpillars leave the eggs. The caterpillars eat the milkweed. In only two weeks, the caterpillars are very big. Hannah likes the colors of the monarch caterpillars. They have stripes of yellow, black and white.

One day, Hannah checks on the caterpillars, but she doesn't see any. Instead of caterpillars, she sees green sacks on the milkweed. She is worried and yells for her mom.

"Don't worry, Hannah. The caterpillars make a cocoon. In the cocoon they change from caterpillars to butterflies," Ericka explains.

Hannah checks the cocoons every day. After ten days of waiting, there is movement. A cocoon moves. Hannah sits in front of the cocoon. Little by little the cocoon opens and the wings of the monarch butterfly emerge. The monarch butterfly moves its wings and sun bathes. After a time, it flies north and the cycle continues.

Every year Hannah produces milkweed and flowers in her yard to help the monarch butterflies and every year Hannah - and Ericka - are fascinated by the transformation of these incredible insects.



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