



Monarchs and Milkweed

A Story of Survival

Offered by







Monarchs and Milkweed: A Story of Survival takes you on a journey into the world of butterflies and plants, and introduces the complex relationship between monarchs and milkweed. The exhibit explores how their very survival has been shaped over time by one another, as it leads the visitor through the seasons of a calendar year revealing how both insect and plant grow and interact, culminating in a massive butterfly migration that crosses a continent.

Exhibit Highlights Include:

- Gigantic, colorful insect and flower graphics with a nod to scientific illustration punctuate exhibit topics;
- Video collections showcase migration behaviors, life cycles, etc.;
- Hands-on learning through kid-friendly interactive experiences;
- An immersive video installation, transporting visitors to the overwintering grounds in central Mexico.





TOPIC AREAS

Designed for a family audience, *Monarchs and Milkweed* provides opportunities for learning at every age. Topics include:

- Life cycle of the monarch butterfly;
- The Super Generation of monarchs, able to withstand a long migratory journey and survive the winter months;
- Exploration of the WHERE, WHY and HOW of monarch migration;
- The difference between Eastern and Western monarchs;
- Discovery of the overwintering sites in central Mexico;
- Life cycle and diversity of milkweed plants;
- Milkweed plants and their defenses;
- The monarch and milkweed relationship;
- Monarch pupae feeding strategies;
- Milkweed Community;
- Conservation initiatives.

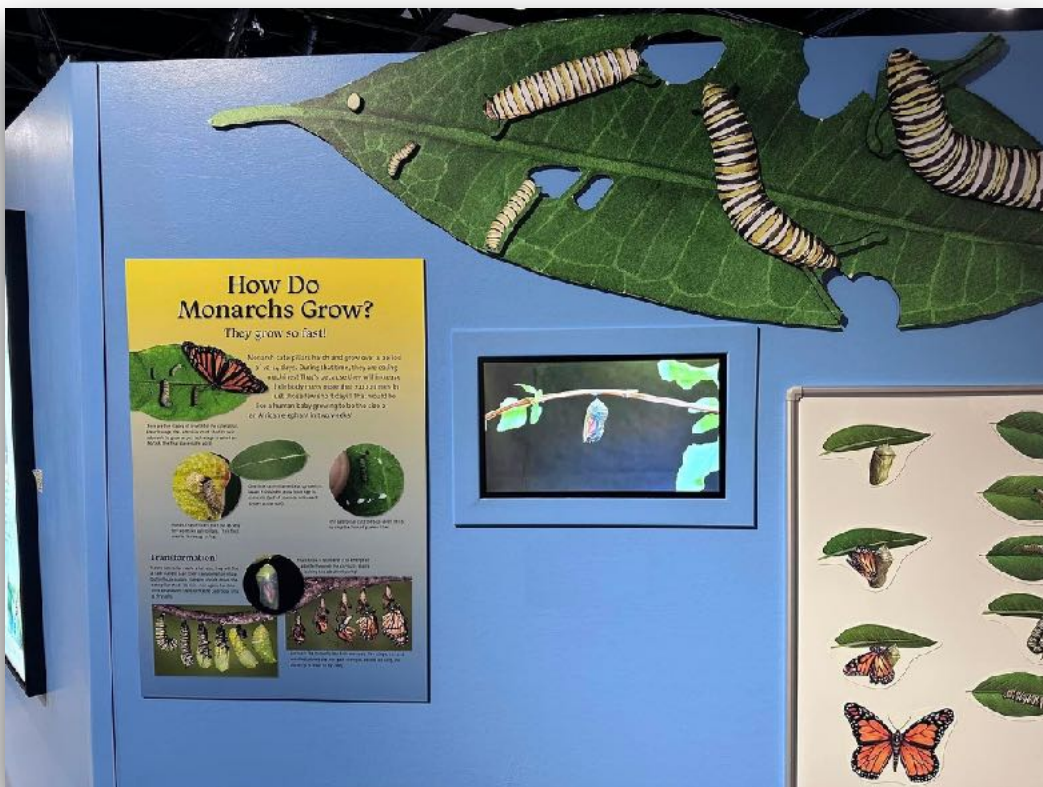
The popularity of monarch butterflies is far reaching. Through this familiarity, complex topics can be made accessible and easily discoverable for visitors of all ages.



What to Expect...



Your visitors will experience a series of freestanding furniture units creating an exploratory space within the gallery, with opportunities for discovery at every turn. Built-in design flexibility means that the individual pieces work together or as separate, individual exhibit pieces that can be stationed throughout many galleries.



Topic Highlight: Eastern Versus Western Monarch Butterflies

Eastern and Western monarch butterfly populations are divided by the Rocky Mountain Range. All monarch butterflies have a unique, multi-generational annual cycle which means that they migrate great distances each winter, seeking out optimum living conditions and taking advantage of their favorite host plants' growing season, region by region.



Western monarchs near Pacific Grove, CA

Western monarchs' shorter west coast migration carries them to areas along the Pacific Ocean, while Eastern monarchs make the journey all the way to central Mexico. For some monarchs that's more than 3,000 miles!



Eastern monarchs at the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve in Michoacán, Mexico, a World Heritage Site.

Wherever they may winter, all monarchs face the same challenges: lack of habitat, human encroachment, and climate change.

VISIT MONARCHS IN CENTRAL MEXICO!

The exhibit centerpiece is a re-creation of the overwintering site in central Mexico, where Eastern monarchs travel each year. Visitors are transported to an oyamel fir forest, where millions of monarch butterflies cluster in the branches and flutter in sunny spots, keeping warm as they await the spring. This area features high definition video projection and actual ambient sounds from the forest, adding to the realistic immersion experience.



Topic Highlight: Milkweed Defense Mechanisms

The milkweed plant gets its name from the milky white sap it produces to defend itself from being eaten by all sorts of insects, most importantly the monarch caterpillar.

Monarchs have developed several strategies to work around this defense, minimizing the amount of the toxic sap that gets ingested along with the leaves and other parts of the plant, which is its only source of food.

Each stage, or instar, of the caterpillar will employ different strategies.



An early instar caterpillar employs circle trenching, protecting itself from being overwhelmed by the sticky, toxic sap.



A late instar caterpillar severs the main artery of the leaf, effectively cutting off the main sap supply.



Rounding out the freestanding furniture components are two six-sided hexagons. The first is designed to give the visitor context on the larger view of the role of pollinators and their relationship to the environment. The second focuses on the diversity, utility, and beauty of the many species of milkweed native to North America.





Exhibit Specifications:

2,500 - 5,000 Square feet

Availability: Winter 2024 and Beyond

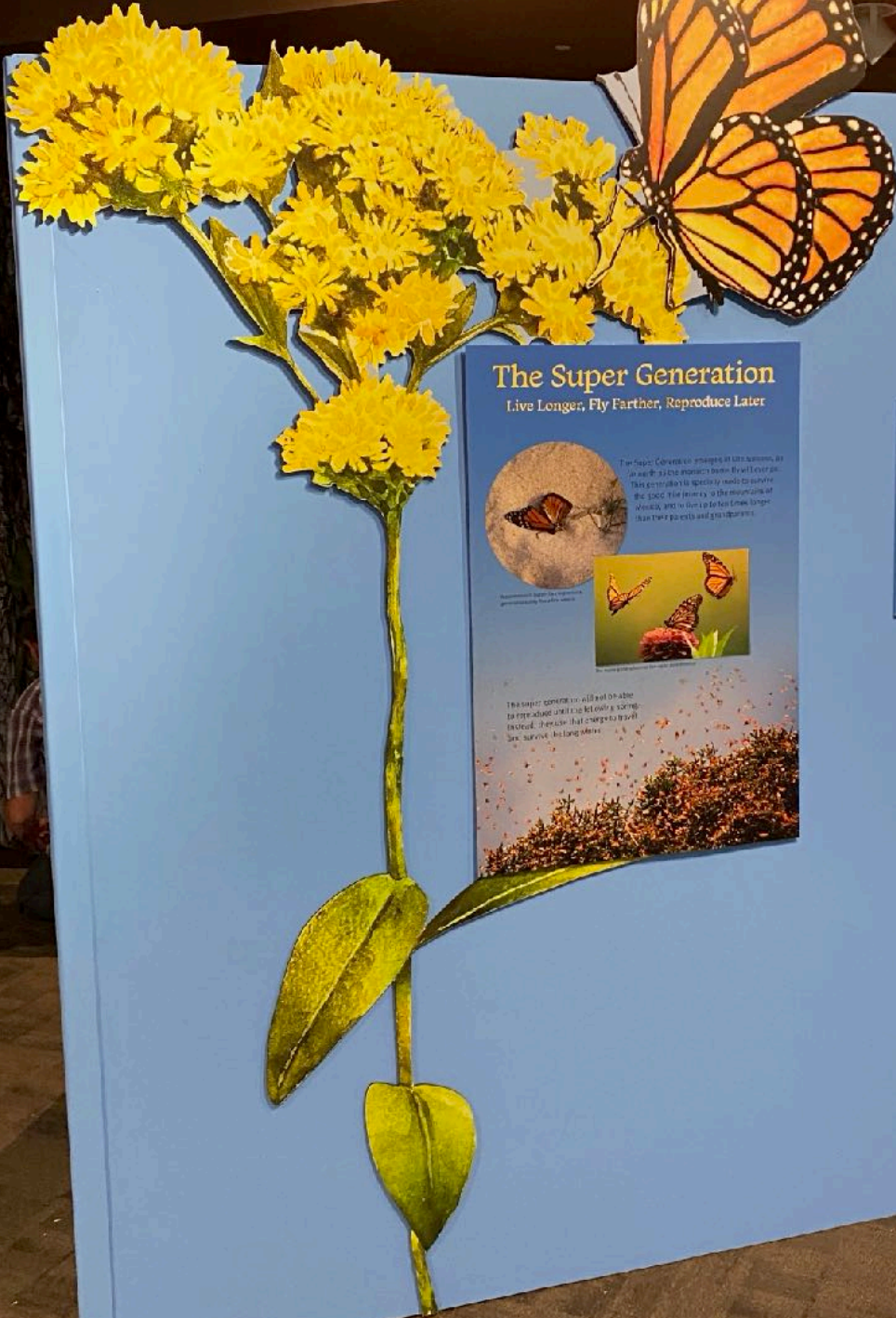
Pricing: Call for Details

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The Super Generation

Live Longer, Fly Farther, Reproduce Later



The Super Generation emerges in late summer, as the weather grows cooler. These butterflies live longer, fly farther, and reproduce later in the season.



The Super Generation is able to fly farther and live longer because they are able to store more energy during their long flight.



A small yellow rectangular label with text, likely providing additional information about the exhibit.

