

Feeding & Releasing:

Painted ladies feed by sipping nectar through their long coiled proboscis.

Feeding the Painted Ladies is easy. Simply place some fresh flowers (Carnations or mums) on the bottom of your pavilion. You will want to be certain that they have not been sprayed with pesticides or insects repellants.

Mix 2 teaspoons of sugar into a cup of water and stir. Keep This refrigerated. Sprinkle on Flowers daily, or loosely wad up facial tissue into 2-inch balls and wet them with the sugar water. Set the wads on a paper plate in your habitat.

The Life span of a adult Painted Lady is 2 to 4 weeks, so after observing them for several days, and if you are located in the United States and the weather conditions permits it (55 degrees or warmer) you may release them into the environment. They are wonderful pollinators of plants.



Painted Lady Butterflies

(Vanessa cardui)

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Metamorphosis:

Depending on temperature, the metamorphosis can take up to 3 weeks

And the butterflies may live an additional 2-4 weeks.

When the Caterpillars Arrive:

OPEN IMMEDIATELY!

The caterpillars are reasonably hardy but you need to transfer them to their cups as soon as possible after their arrival. You will need to place one caterpillar in each portion cup with some food on the bottom and a lid on top.

Before you begin, keep in mind that caterpillars are sensitive to bacteria and excessive moisture. Whom ever is in charge of the setup needs to have clean, dry hands and materials.

Preparation:

- 1) Separate the small cups and set them aside
- 2) Open the large cup of food. With a spoon, scoop a half-spoonful of food into small cups.
- 3) Using the bottom of another small cup compress the food firmly into the bottom cup.
- 4) Repeat this step for all small cups. They should each now contain a generous quarter-inch of compressed food.
- 5) With a small stick pin poke several small holes in the lids of your small cups.
- 6) Open the cup of Larvae. Avoid tearing the paper liner as you remove the lid. With a small brush or probe gently pick up one larva and transfer to your small cup. Replace the lid on the large larvae cup.
- 7) Snap the lid shut on your small larvae cup. Repeat until you've placed one larvae in each small cup.

Important Notice:

The cups must remain undisturbed as the caterpillars grow and molt. Place out of direct sunlight where students can see inside but where they will remain undisturbed.



Caring for the Caterpillars:

Its VERY important that the cups with caterpillars stay out of direct sunlight and remain upright and capped! Direct Sunlight warms the interior of the cup, causing water to condense inside. This excess water can cause the caterpillars to sicken and die. Keep the cups vertical. An inverted or tilted cup may dislodge the food supply or worse, prevent the formation of the chrysalis. The lid on each cup keeps the food clean and the larvae inside. The larvae don't need anything other than the food you have pushed inside the cups.

Don't be alarmed if you see little or no movement in a cup at first. There's always a adjustment period for the caterpillar. Within a few days, a bit of spun silk is a good sign that they're healthy

Life Cycle:

The Larva receives a biological message to climb to the top of the container, connecting itself with a knob of silk, Its crucial that its not disturbed during the initial part of this 7 to 10 day phase of life. What you will see is a caterpillar hanging in a J-shape by its tail that's attached to the underside of the lid.

The warmer the room, the faster the change occurs. At temperatures between 68 and 75 degrees F, a Painted Lady caterpillar will need 7 to 10 to form the chrysalis.



The Painted Lady lapses into a period of relative quietude. Although this seems to be a time of resting, its' really a rapid and astounding time of change. The body parts of the caterpillar are undergoing transformations that will become the butterfly. This is also the most vulnerable stage of the caterpillars life so far. The larvae has no protection until the final molt and the emergence of the chrysalis covering. Even then, the only means of protecting itself from predators is to shake when disturbed.

The Birth of the Butterfly:

Depending on the temperature the butterfly will begin to emerge in about 7 -10 days. The darker the chrysalid, the closer it is to emerging. After the Painted Lady emerges, It will rest in a vertical position and force blood into its veins of its wings to expand the to full size. About 2 hours after emergence, the wings will be full-sized and hardened, and then your butterfly will be able to fly. Many times during this expansion process, you will see red liquid which looks like blood coming from the tail of the butterfly. This is called *meconium*, it is only leftover wing pigments and un-needed tissues from the butterfly wing formation. Its natural and normal and means that the butterfly is healthy.

