

Painted Lady Butterfly

A CAROLINA™ CareSheet

Immediate Care and Handling

Larva (caterpillar) and chrysalis (chrysalid)

Keep larvae in indirect light; direct sunlight can kill them. In 5 to 10 days, larvae will climb to the top of the cup and each form as a chrysalis. Do not disturb the chrysalises for at least 1 to 2 days until they harden. Then, open the cup, remove the paper with the chrysalises attached, and tape the paper to the butterfly cage.

Butterfly (adult)

Adult butterflies should emerge in 7 to 10 days. Make a feeding solution by dissolving 2 teaspoons of sugar in ½ cup of water. Keep solution refrigerated when not in use.

You can make a feeder from an empty plastic film canister:

1. Clean with a mild solution of household bleach in water (1 part bleach in 9 parts water).
2. Rinse canister *thoroughly* and fill with warm water with sugar-water solution.
3. Punch a hole in the canister's lid, large enough to easily insert 2 white ¼" W × 2" L felt wicks.
4. Dip the wicks into the sugar-water solution and squeeze them out to remove excess.
5. Insert the wicks into the hole in the lid, leaving approximately ¾" extending from the top of the lid. Secure lid.
6. Fold the protruding wicks toward the opposite sides of the canister.
7. Replace the sugar-water solution every other day. With proper nutrition, adult butterflies generally live for 1 to 3 weeks.

Note: *Keep butterflies from reaching the open container of liquid, or they might drown.*

Eggs

Female butterflies may lay eggs 5 to 7 days after emerging. Look for pinhead-sized, mint-green dots. Fertile eggs hatch in about 3 days.

FAQ's

My caterpillars aren't moving. Are they dead?

Probably not. Caterpillars often rest for hours at a time, especially just before molting. Open the cup and gently touch the caterpillar with the tip of a soft brush. This should cause the caterpillar to move slightly.

Can I take larvae out of the cup?

It is best to leave the cup closed until you are ready to move the chrysalises into the flight cage. There are salts and oils on your hands that can harm the caterpillars. Opening the cup also might allow bacteria or mold to spoil the food.

My caterpillars aren't growing. What's wrong?

The most common possibility is low temperature. Also, the caterpillars may be preparing to molt.

My caterpillars are turning red or pink. What's wrong?

The caterpillars have a bacterial infection that will kill them. Contact Carolina for replacements. Discard any

sick caterpillars and non-washable equipment that has been in contact with infected caterpillars; treat washable equipment with a bleach solution (1 part bleach in 9 parts water) and rinse before reusing.

Is there enough food for the caterpillars? I'm afraid they will starve.

There is plenty of food in the cup to grow all the larvae to maturity.

The caterpillars are so hungry that they are eating away the paper in the top of the cup.

The caterpillars chew the paper because of an instinctive urge to disperse before molting into a chrysalis. If this becomes a problem, replace the paper with a fresh piece of tissue paper, avoiding tissue papers that contain perfumes or lotions. The caterpillars will be too close to molting to eat through another piece of paper.

What about air for the caterpillars?

There should be some tiny holes punched in the lid of the larval cup. If not, use a thumbtack to poke 3 to 5 holes in the lid. If there are too many holes, the food will dry out and become inedible.

What do painted lady caterpillars normally eat?

In nature, they eat a wide variety of plants including thistle, plantain, hollyhock, mallow, malva, and sunflower.

My butterflies just came out and there's red liquid all over. Is it blood?

Your butterflies are fine. The red liquid is *meconium*—liquid waste mixed with extra pigment left over from wing formation.

Some of the butterflies have crumpled wings. What can I do?

When the butterflies first emerge, their wings are crumpled and soft. If the humidity is too low, the wings may dry and harden before they can expand. Try misting the inside of the cage. Also, if a chrysalis falls to the bottom of the cage, the butterfly will not be able to expand its wings properly when it emerges. Place a drop of nontoxic glue on the tip of the chrysalis's abdomen and glue it back on the paper. Once the glue dries, hang the paper in the cage.

What is a chrysalis?

The chrysalis is a pupa with a hard outer shell.

Can my butterflies feed from flowers?

Yes, nectar from flowers is a natural food. Place a flowering plant in the butterfly cage. It may help to sprinkle it with sugar water.

Can I use cut flowers?

Yes, but only if you put them in a vase with a narrow neck so the butterflies cannot drown.

I used some plants as you suggested. Now I see some pinhead-sized green things on the leaves. Are these butterfly eggs? What do I do?

Congratulations! They are eggs and they will hatch after 3 to 5 days.

I only see 2 pairs of legs on each butterfly. What happened to the other pair?

The painted lady does not use its first pair of legs for walking. Instead, these legs are feathery and wrap around the butterfly's neck, almost like a scarf.

How can I tell the male from the female?

Female butterflies have a larger, more rounded abdomen, which is caused by the egg mass. The sides of

the female's abdomen curve outward. The abdomen of a male, when viewed from the top, has fairly straight sides.

Problems? We hope not, but if so contact us. We want you to have a good experience.

Orders and replacements: 1-800-334-5551 then select Customer Service

Technical Support and Questions: caresheets@carolina.com



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