



FYN Garden Q & A Series

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FYN Topic: Monarch Butterfly

Question: I raised, tagged and released a monarch on 5/15/12. When I photographed the monarch two weeks later, I saw circular bare spots where scales were missing on the butterflies right wings. One week later when I photographed the same monarch the wing membrane had torn at the tip of the forewing and was now a hole. I see no evidence of this on the left wings. What do you think happened? Email from Bill. R.

Answer: (from monarch experts, Jim and Kel Dunford & Dr. Lincoln Brower) The missing wing scale spots are undoubtedly due to injury while the monarch's chrysalid under-went rapid metamorphosis (it's transformation from a caterpillar to adult butterfly). Usually, in the fall in colder parts of Florida, monarch chrysalids get lightly frozen and exhibit similar wing damage as yours. Your monarch in south Florida may have received excessive heat causing damage to its chrysalid. I am sure the scale loss was not due to the tagging process done locally to monitor adult monarchs. **Note:** You can still help tag and track monarchs. Local experts are studying the residential longevity and survival rates of adult monarchs in our part of Florida. ID tags and data sheets are available. Send an email to Master Gardener, Gayle Edwards at F1monarch@gmail.com.



Monarch with Scales Missing



Monarch with Scales Missing

Useful Links

- <http://www.floridayards.org>
- <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>
- <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
- <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>
- <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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