

Making a DIY Butterfly House



While caterpillars are eating and growing, you'll need to create a butterfly house. You can make one out of almost any type of container: a cardboard box, a big glass jar, a plastic tub, an empty aquarium. Look around your house or classroom to see what can be used.

Glass or Plastic

If you're using a **glass container** or **clear plastic tub**, you'll need to make a cover for it. The cover should let air in, but keep your new butterflies from flying out. Cut a piece of cheesecloth or wire screen so it's larger than the top of your glass container. Secure it in place with tape, string, or a rubber band, or by bending wire screen into shape.

TRY THIS: *Decorate your butterfly house with pictures and drawings of things that butterflies like. Do you know what butterflies like? Find out!*

A Cardboard Box

If you're using a **cardboard box**, create a "window" by using some clear plastic wrap. Cut a piece of plastic wrap larger than the box top and secure in place with tape. Now turn your box so the clear "window" becomes a wall instead.

Use a pen or pencil to poke lots of air holes in the roof and remaining walls. Cut a flap on one of the walls large enough for your hand to fit through. You'll use it to place the butterflies and their food in the box.



Good to Know

- **Frass**, the little balls that will begin to appear all over the cup, is caterpillar excrement.
- Caterpillars shed their **exoskeletons** several times. You may see small black balls of exoskeleton in the cup or attached to the end of the chrysalis.
- Caterpillar **webs** are sticky and dense. They help caterpillars hang onto leaves in windy weather and protect them from predators.
- The chrysalis may **quiver** or **tremble**. This action discourages predators.
- **Meconium** is the reddish fluid that butterflies expel when they emerge from their chrysalises. It's left over from metamorphosis and is not blood.
- If you have both males and females, females may lay **eggs** before release. When eggs hatch, try feeding the caterpillars thistle, parsley, or hollyhock leaves.