



PARADIS BUTTERFLY FARM



Ferma de fluturi Paradis

Paradis International College
Iași, Romania

The Butterfly Farm is an innovative project researching butterfly metamorphosis, launched by Paradis International College during the school year symbolized by Joy. The butterfly species that go through their entire development cycle here offer students, teachers, and visitors the opportunity to discover the beauty and complexity of the natural world up close.

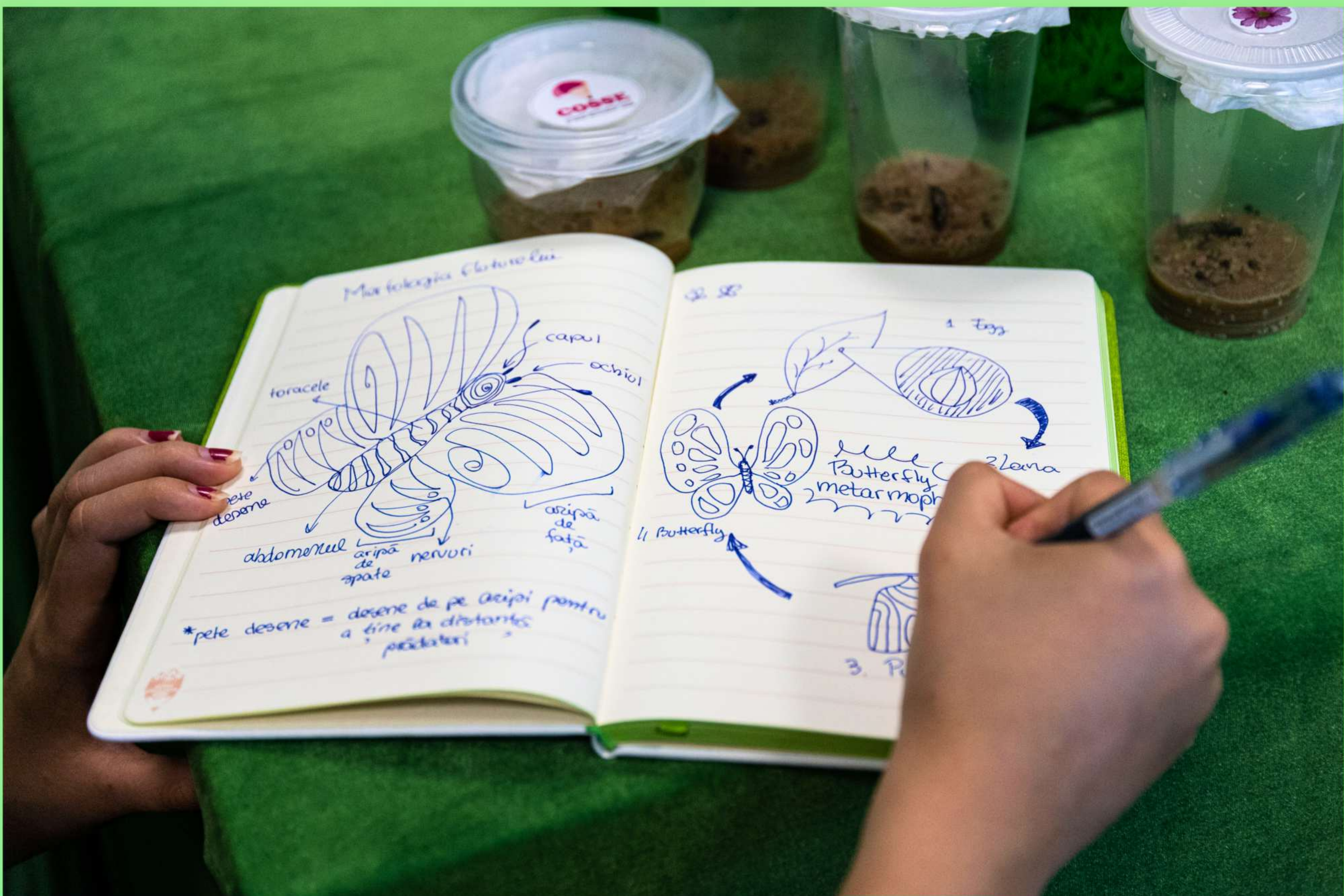


Paradis students gaze in amazement at the eggs laid on plants, as well as the voracious larvae, which begin to feed as soon as they hatch and have the ability to increase their size up to 100 times. Then, the pupae remain hanging on a silk thread until the butterflies are ready to emerge and take flight.



The older students take notes, because this project, in addition to the delight it brings us all, is one of learning and research.





THE METAMORPHOSIS PROCESS IN BUTTERFLIES

Metamorphosis is a biological process of transformation that some animals undergo after birth, developing from their juvenile form (in insects, the larva) to their adult form, through a noticeable and fairly rapid change in appearance, through cell growth and differentiation, including adult sexual organs. Some insects, amphibians, mollusks, and crustaceans undergo metamorphosis, which is usually (but not always) accompanied by a change in habitat or behavior. The life cycle of a butterfly is one of the most amazing transformations that occur in nature. It is fascinating to watch, making it a wonderful educational opportunity for both children and adults.

Butterflies go through four major stages of metamorphosis:
EGG, LARVA, PUPA, AND ADULT BUTTERFLY.

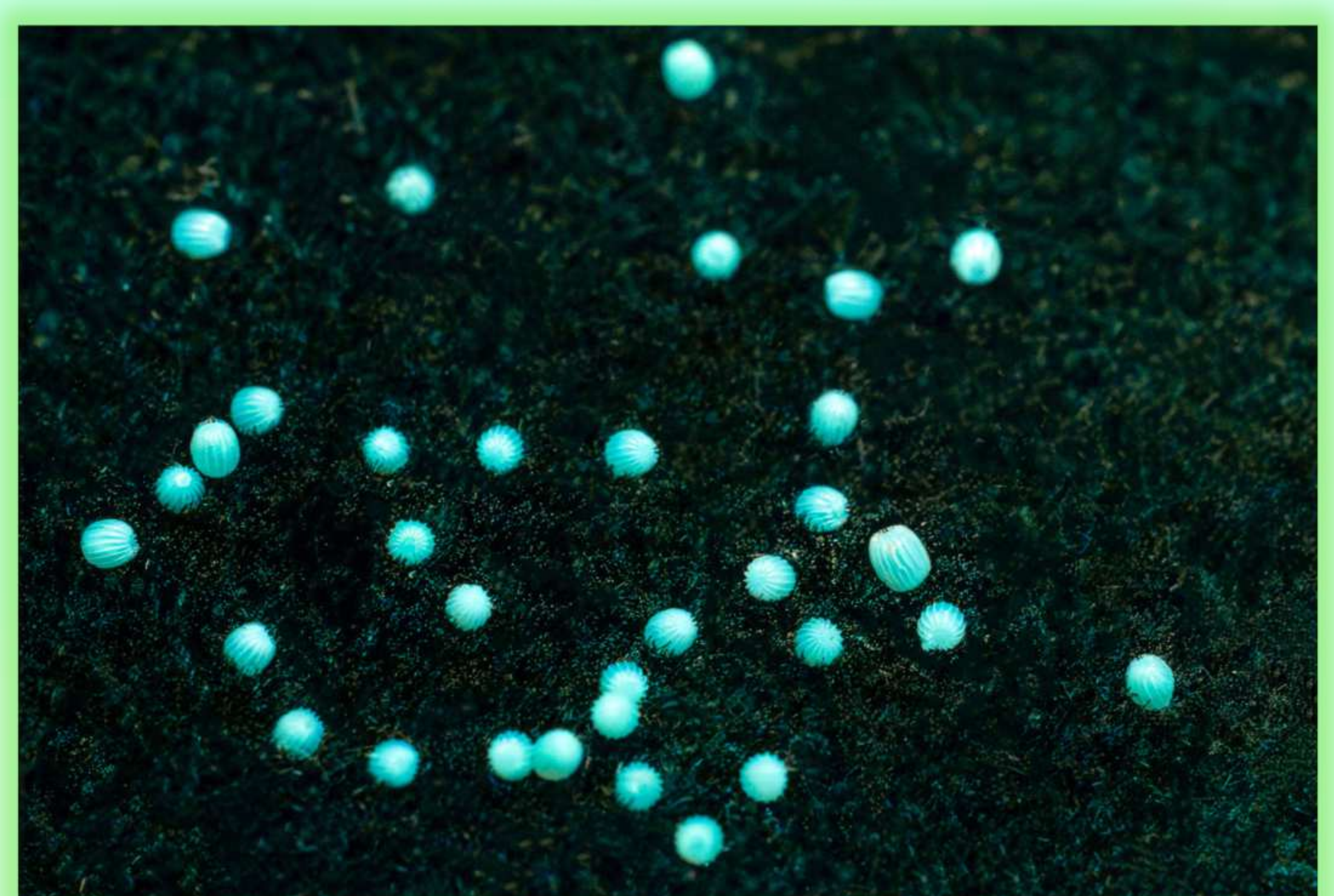
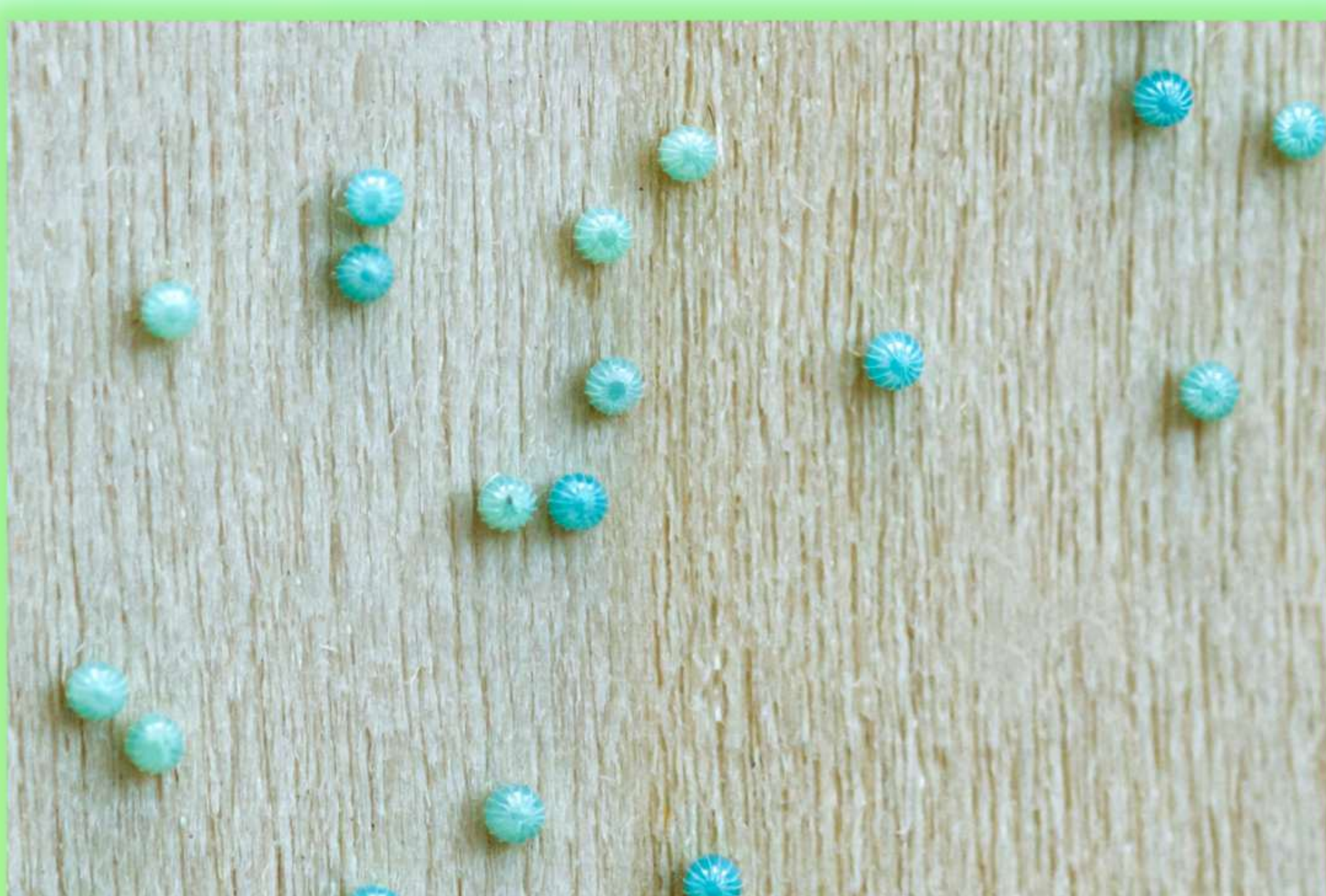


1. EGG STAGE

In spring, the female looks for plants on which to lay her eggs. She lays them one by one on the leaves of the plant. The first stage of a butterfly's life is a very small egg, oval, round, or cylindrical in shape, depending on the species of butterfly. Their size varies from a pinhead to the tip of a pencil.



If you look closely, you can sometimes see the caterpillar growing inside. Butterfly eggs are most often found on plant leaves. The mother uses a glue-like substance to "stick" the egg to the leaf. The egg has a small, funnel-shaped opening to allow water and air in. It also contains enough nutrients for the caterpillar to grow inside.



2. LARVA STAGE

The second stage of butterfly development is the larva.

We call the butterfly larva a caterpillar. It develops in the egg in about a week. Then it begins to make its way out by chewing through part of the egg. After hatching, the caterpillar is hungry, and often the first thing it eats is the eggshell itself. The caterpillar must eat the leaf on which the egg was laid, so it is vital that the mother chose to lay her eggs on the right type of leaf.



Caterpillars need to grow quickly, so they eat continuously. As they expand, their exoskeleton does not stretch, so they shed their skin several times during the growth stage. Then they look for tasty green leaves.

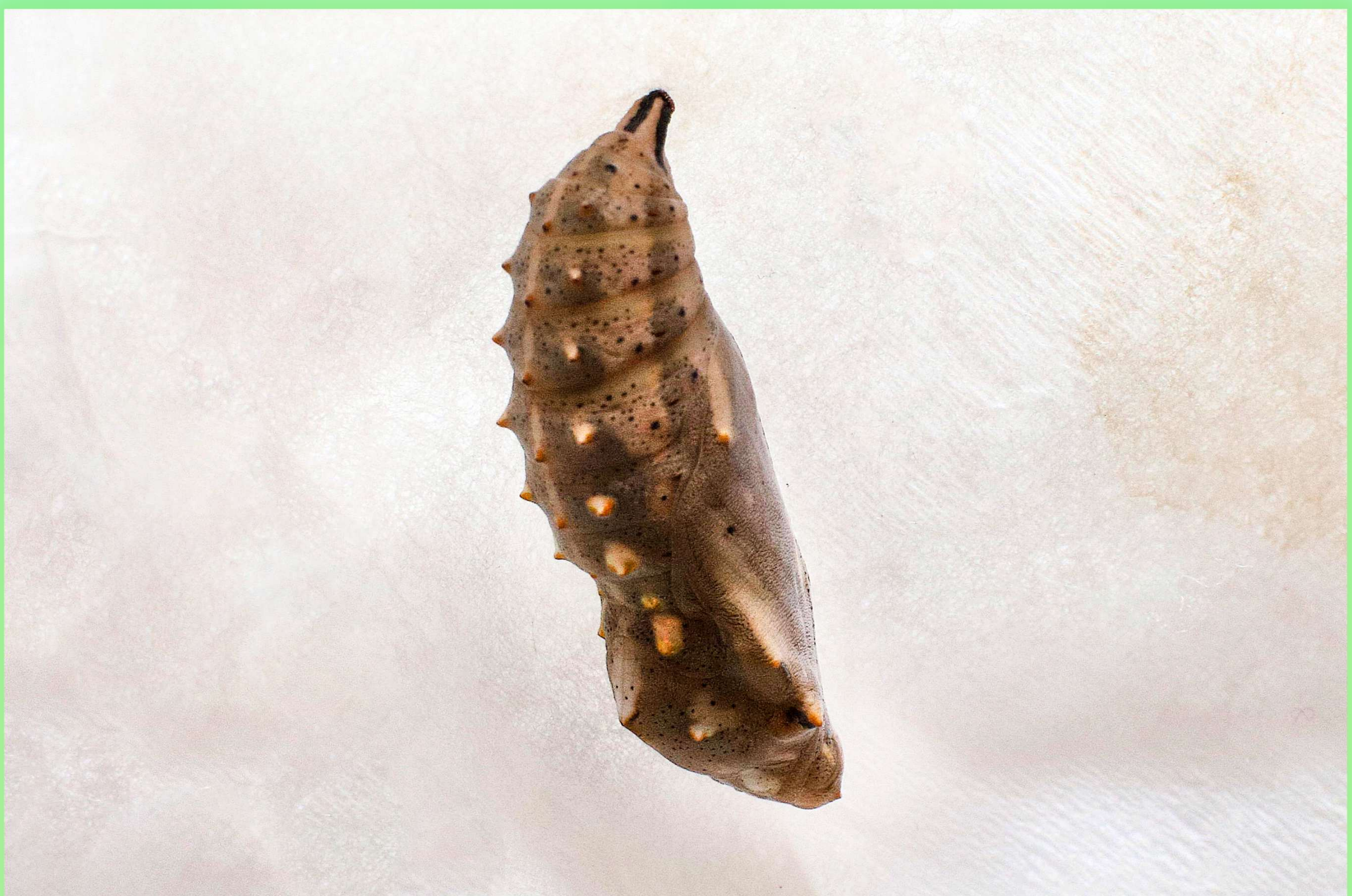
As the caterpillar eats and grows, its hard skin stretches so much that it eventually cracks. Now the caterpillar emerges from its old skin wearing a brand new one.



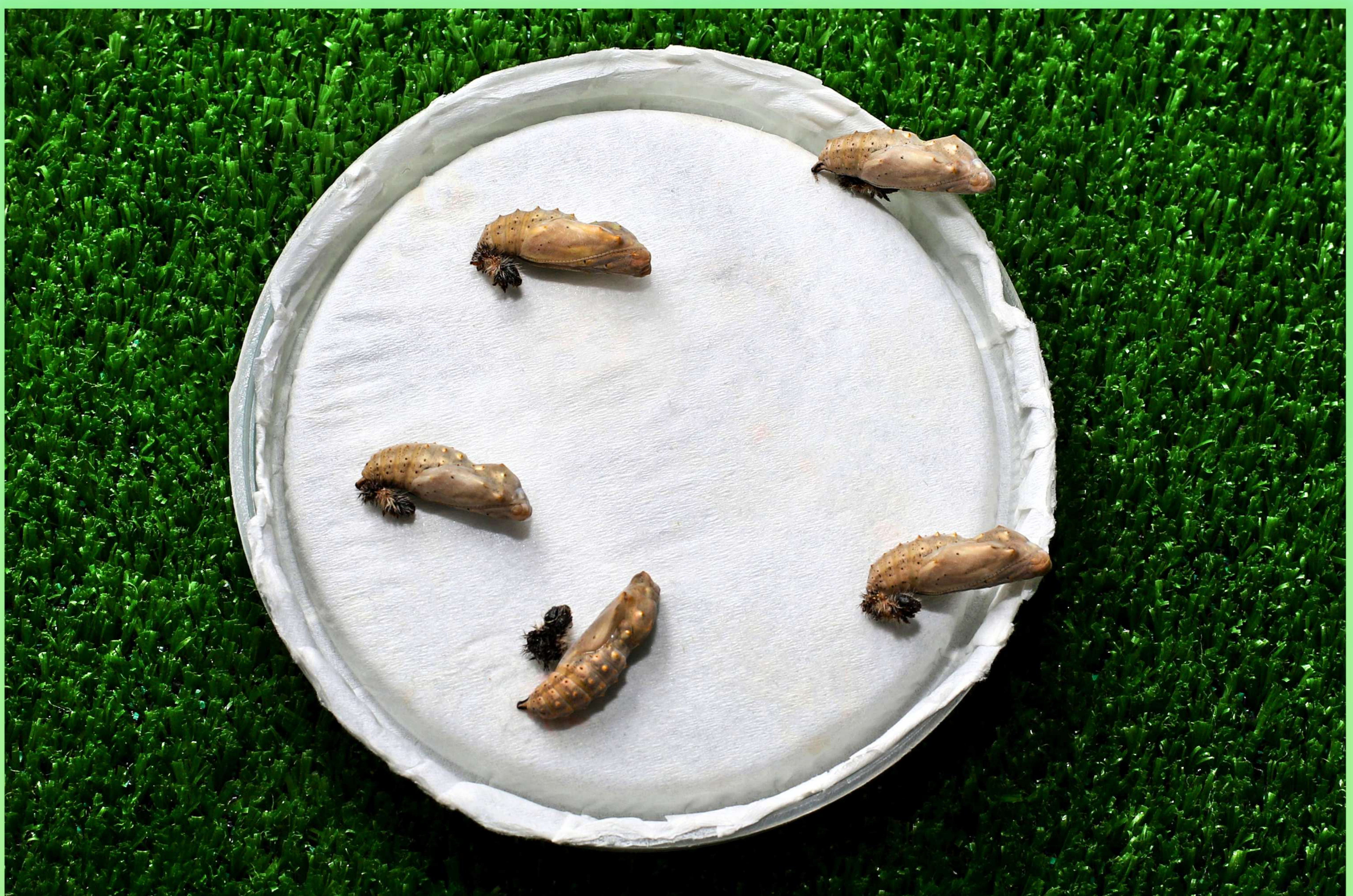
3. PUPA STAGE

When the caterpillar reaches its maximum size, it encloses itself in a chrysalis or pupa.

The transformation over time looks like a change from a resting caterpillar to a shell-like covering. Inside, the body undergoes an incredible cellular transformation called metamorphosis. The parts we recognize as a butterfly begin to form.



The transformation consumes so much energy that the pupa loses more than half of its original weight. The limbs and organs have all transformed by the time the pupa is ready to emerge as a beautiful butterfly. The time a butterfly spends in the pupal stage varies greatly depending on the species, ranging from a few days to a year.



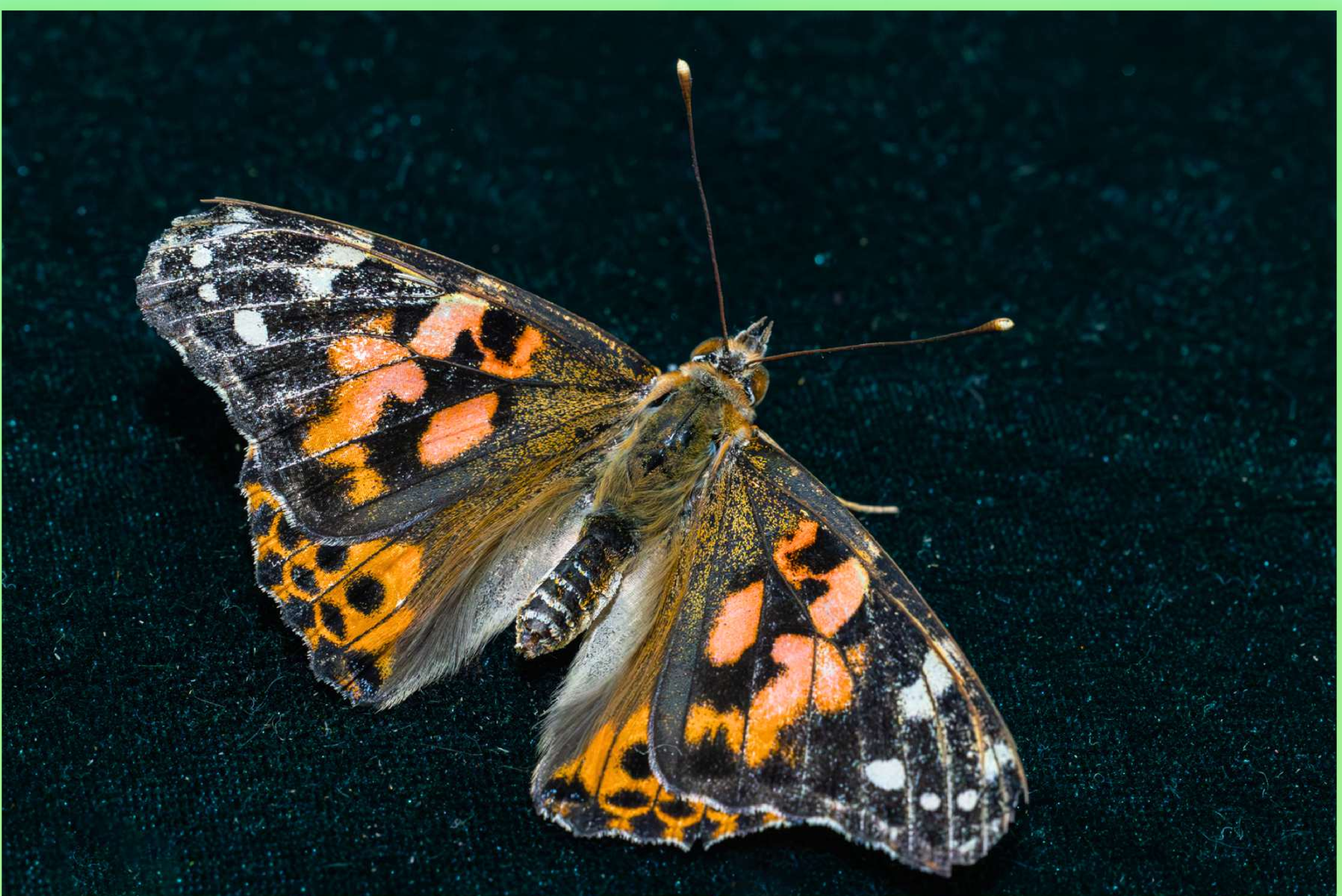
4. ADULT BUTTERFLY STAGE

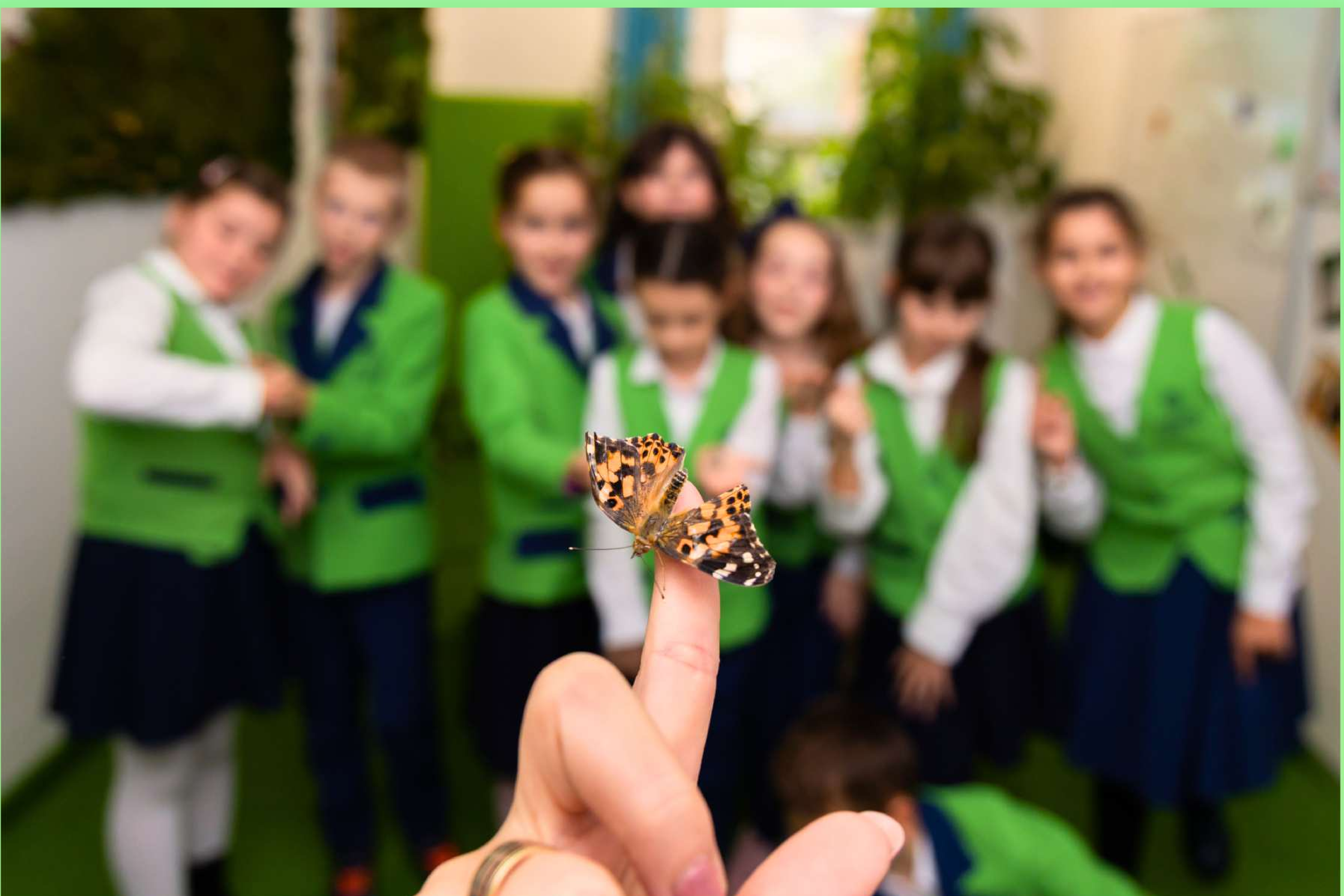
The final stage is adulthood. It begins when the chrysalis shell cracks and the butterfly stretches its legs and antennae out of the shell. As soon as its legs are strong enough, the butterfly crawls out of the shell. For now, its body is soft and wrinkled, but all its organs are fully developed.



The wings are wrinkled, but don't worry - after a period of rest, the butterfly pumps blood into its wings for several hours and they grow to their full length.

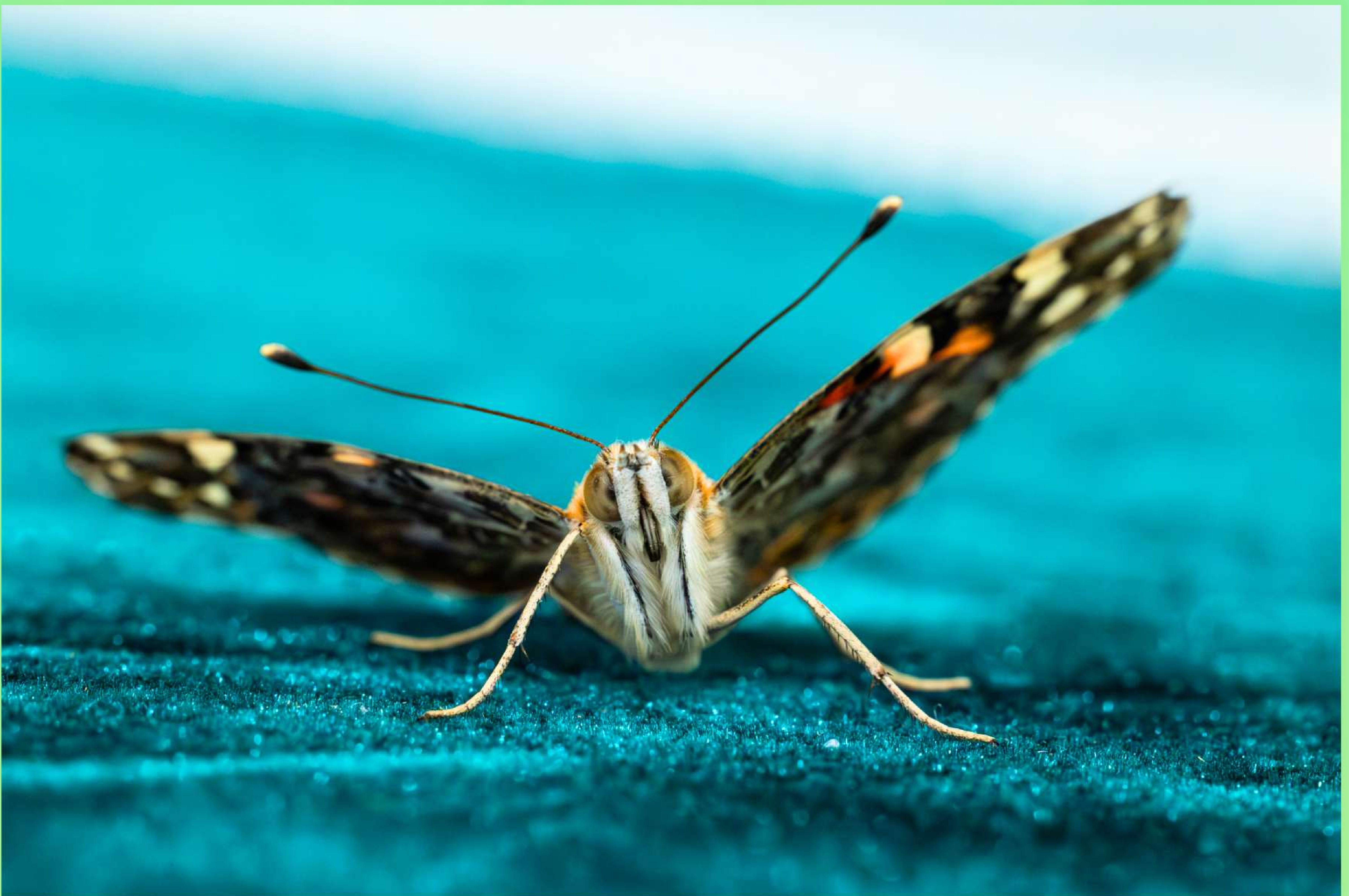
The sun dries its wings and the butterfly spreads them for the first time. After that, they begin to fly and search for a mate. Adult butterflies are constantly looking to reproduce, and a fertilized female will find the right type of leaf on which to lay her eggs and start the life cycle all over again.







The Paradis Butterfly Farm is a complex interdisciplinary project that naturally integrates concepts of business, biology, and personal development. Students observe the delicate metamorphosis of butterflies and understand how ecosystems work, while learning to think like small entrepreneurs, to plan, create, and give meaning to their own ideas. In this process, they develop patience, empathy, and the courage to work in a team and try new things. The Butterfly Farm is thus not just a place of observation, but a living laboratory where knowledge, creativity, and personal development come together in a comprehensive, relevant, and memorable educational experience.





CONTACT PARADIS

**Address: 8C Dealul Zorilor Street,
Rediu, Iași county, 700485, Romania**

Phone: +40725.893.627

E-mail: contact@paradis-college.ro

Site: www.paradis-college.ro

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