**Life stages**

When checking milkweed plants for signs of monarch activity, it is helpful to look for specific signs that relate to the various life stages:

1. **Eggs** are usually found on the underside of milkweed leaves; cream-colored, ribbed football shapes the size of a pinhead.
2. **Larvae** are black, yellow, & white banding; 2 head filaments, 2 rear filaments; each growth stage (instar) is distinctive in size & shape.
3. **Pupa** forms after 5th instar; bright mint-green with gold studs that aid in camouflage.
4. **Emerging Adult** forms 10-14 days after forming a chrysalis; once pigmented scales become visible.
5. **Adult** are often found on new milkweed growth, often the tiniest plants at the edges of a patch.

**Where to look?**

- Eggs are often found on the underside of the leaf on new milkweed growth, often the tiniest plants at the edges of a patch.
- Caterpillars are often found on milkweed leaves with damage (bites!)
- Chrysalises may be found on milkweed branches or nearby structures. They are very delicate, so be extremely careful when looking for them!
Defining features

Bumblebee species (of the genus Bombus) share some defining features:

1. Bumble bees have furry, rounded bodies, large black eyes, and bent antennae.
2. They fly fairly slowly, buzz the flowers they visit, climb among blooms on the same flower stalk, and are quite docile – they rarely sting unless defending their nest.
3. They can have black, buff, yellow, red/orange, or white body segments, and brown wings. They collect pollen on leg ‘baskets’ and can fly in low light and cool temps.

How do I know I'm not seeing a different insect?

- Look-alikes include hoverflies, honeybees, and carpenter bees.
- Look for the key signs of a bumblebee: four wings (not two), heart-shaped face (not round), fuzzy abdomen (not smooth), and stout body (not long).
- When in doubt, check our pollinator resources below!