

Easy rearing instructions for cecropia silk moth:

- Keep egg in cup with lid on until the caterpillar hatches; this usually takes 11 to 13 days. Throughout this entire life cycle, keep caterpillar out of direct sunlight.
- Do not place food in cup until egg hatches.
- When the egg hatches, place one washed and dried leaf into container. Be very careful when you close the lid back not to crush the tiny caterpillar. That should keep it satisfied at least for the rest of the day.
- Daily, keep putting in fresh cleaned leaves, and allow the caterpillar time to crawl on to the new leaf before removing the old leaf. Repeat this process until the caterpillar is shedding into the second instar (every time they shed their skin, it is called an instar) that usually takes one week. Never disturb a caterpillar that is attached to a leaf or on the sides or top of the container: the caterpillar may be in the process of shedding its skin.
- The second week, the caterpillar is now getting too big for the small hatching container. It's time to put it in something bigger. You may want to have an intermediate stage at this point and put the caterpillar into a cottage cheese container or one of equivalent size.
- Offer fresh food often, and remove old food and droppings at the same time as well! Wash container if needed when adding fresh food. Watch for excess moisture. If you notice moisture developing on the top and sides of the container, make very tiny holes in the lid for ventilation, and wipe away excess moisture. Always pat dry food stock before offering to your caterpillar.
- As your caterpillar grows into 4th and 5th instars it will require more care, sometimes replacing leaves one to three times a day! Remove droppings every time also. At this time it is recommended you move your caterpillar into a screened container for better ventilation. We offer several sizes and styles of insect rearing chambers, starting at \$12.95. Making a small watertight vase to hold the stems of food plant will keep food fresh in between feedings. Never let the leaves dry out.
- As your caterpillar gets older, it will begin to make a cocoon. You will usually see a large pile of digested leaves, and runny stool as the caterpillar prepares to cocoon. Sometimes it will not eat for several days as it readies for cocooning. Provide many leaves for it to wrap up in.
- Your cecropia moth will hatch from its cocoon in a few weeks. Release it within the second day, after dusk.
- If this is the second brood of caterpillars for the season (after August 15 in our zone) cocoons must be refrigerated after one to three weeks so they can overwinter to emerge in spring. Do not wait more than one to three weeks to refrigerate; the moth may begin to hatch. Late hatching cecropia will not have sufficient time to complete another life cycle.

Cecropia plant list: red maple, pin cherry, white paper birch, yellow birch, Norway maple, box elder, silver maple, shagbark hickory, common lilac, black walnut, apple, pussy willow, elm, white oak, red oak, pin oak, northern red oak, black oak, sassafras, and mountain ash. Rinse leaves well, and pat dry before offering to caterpillars. Store in refrigerator. Discard any with black spots, or mold.

We hope you enjoy the process of watching your caterpillar grow into a beautiful adult giant silk moth. All of our livestock are deemed healthy at time of purchase. If you loose your caterpillar in spite of your best efforts, some loss is normal. We do not offer a refund or replacement of lepidoptera. The costs are low, the educational experience priceless, not matter the outcome. Please feel free to call us if you have any questions that have not been answered here.