

## Beautiful but Toxic



*Monarch/USFWS*

Did you know that milkweed, the only food of the monarch caterpillar, is poisonous to most vertebrates (including humans)? Monarchs are specially adapted to absorb the plant's toxins, and in the process become poisonous themselves. As a result, most bird species find monarchs distasteful.

Other butterflies, like the viceroy,



*Viceroy/USFWS*

take advantage of the monarch's toxicity by mimicking their appearance. Though these butterflies are not as poisonous as their look-alikes, many birds are fooled by their disguise and leave them alone.