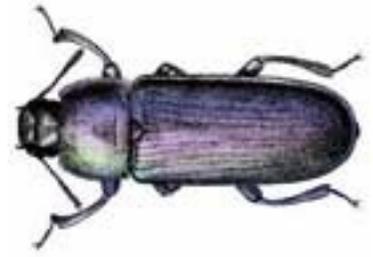
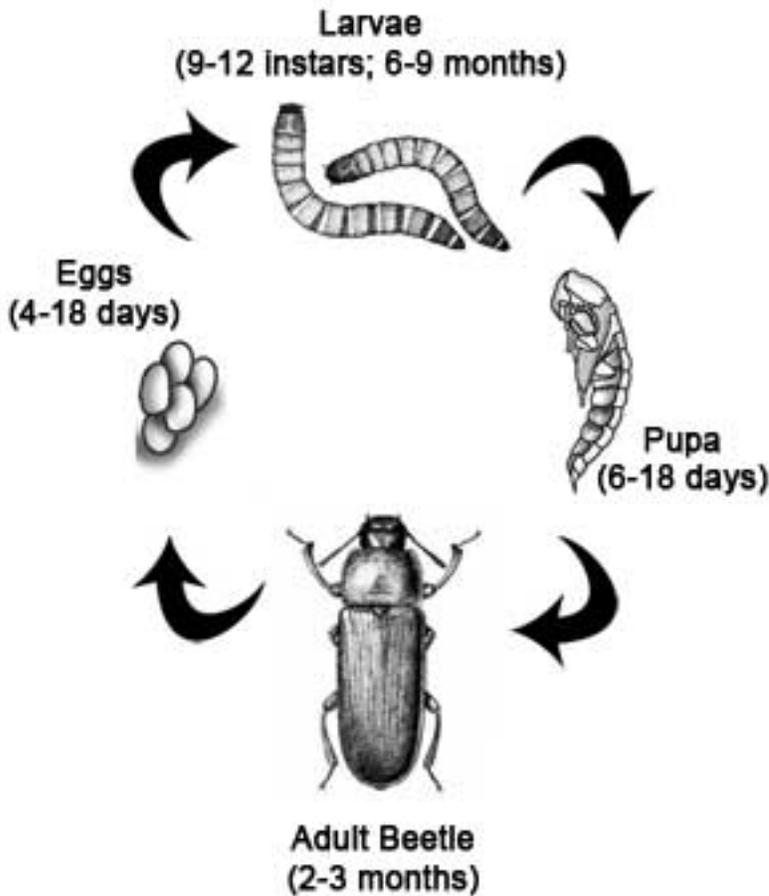


MOBY PINCHER'S



Mealworm Life Cycle

Mealworm (Tenebrio Monitor) Life Cycle



Mealworms

Warning! You must always arrange for students to wash their hands after handling worms.

Mealworms will live in a jar that has several small air holes. The amazing part is that after a few months they turn into beetles. Keep a cup of cornmeal, oatmeal or wheat bran for each 10 to 15 worms in a jar. Add wheat bran, meal or oatmeal to worms at a ratio of 2:1. The worms eat and burrow in the meal. They also need a moisture source (carrots, potatoes, apples) to remain lively and to keep them from drying out. Remove any old moisture food that the worms don't eat rapidly. Keep mealworms out of direct sunlight. Once a month or so I pour out the contents over a screen and replace with fresh cornmeal. Indoor lighting and temperatures will keep them just fine. Leave them in the science centers and students enjoy observing them during centers time. Students enjoy recording data such as the population of the jar and the size of the worms. When the beetles start appearing the students can write entries in their journals describing how they witnessed the life cycle over time. Mealworms can be refrigerated and they will last for months.

Life Cycle

Mealworms are the larvae of the darkling ground beetle. The beetle undergoes a complete metamorphosis that results in an egg, larva, pupa and beetle stage. The time required for each stage is as follows:

Egg.....4 weeks
Larvae.....10 weeks
Pupa.....3 weeks
Adult.....4 weeks

Mealworms stay in the larvae stage for 10 weeks because the food they eat is not full of nutrients. It is very dry and low in vitamins. Microorganisms living in the digestive systems of the mealworm help by making some of the vitamins and limiting nutrients. Upon hatching the larvae are too small to see. As they grow they molt and shed their exoskeleton and form a new larger one. Time is required for this and is a major reason mealworms stay in the larval stage for most of its life.



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