

LIFE HISTORY OF SILK MOTH

There are four stages in the life-cycle of silk moth—egg, caterpillar (larva), pupa and adult.

The female silk moth lays hundreds of eggs on the mulberry leaves. The larvae that hatch out in 3–5 days are called **Caterpillars**.

Caterpillars feed on mulberry leaves and grow in size. When the caterpillar is ready (in 5–6 weeks) to enter the pupal stage, it stops feeding and its salivary gland starts secreting a sticky fluid (a protein called **fibroin**). This fluid hardens on exposure to air and forms a long thread of silk. This thread gets wrapped around its body to form a ball-like structure called **cocoon**. At this stage, the caterpillar becomes a **pupa**.

The silk moth continues to develop inside the cocoon.

At the end of the pupal stage, the silk moth cuts open the cocoon and the young moth flies out.