

The Lifecycle of a Silkworm

The natural life cycle of a silkworm lasts about a year, but for much of that time, the eggs lie dormant. When they hatch in the spring, the larvae are only about one millimeter long. Within just a few weeks, they transform into fully developed silkworms, spinning cocoons of pure silk. After a few days in their cocoons, they finally become moths and then mate, lay eggs, and die.

The larva molt four times, and by the time they begin to make their cocoons, a silkworm is 25 times its original size and has grown 10,000 times heavier. An average silkworm will produce a single silk strand between 1,300 to 1,500 meters long, which it uses to create its cocoon over a 48-hour period. Just over one month after hatching as a tiny caterpillar, the female moth will emerge from the cocoon, mate, lay her eggs, and die. The year-long cycle then begins again.