Monarch butterflies (Danaus plexippus) are famous for long-distance migratory flights, where innate color preferences, perception and learning in the context of feeding may be crucial for survival, yet have rarely been explored. Blackiston, Briscoe and Weiss show (pp. 509–520) that monarchs are flexible and proficient learners of new colors, quickly overcoming innate preferences, although they display confusion of colors related to brightness. They also show that monarch eyes contain heterogeneously distributed lateral filter pigments which, together with a green-sensitive visual pigment, permit discrimination of yellow and orange colors, like those found on the milkweed flower (background image). Photograph by Ed Chang.

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