

## Butterflies evolve at amazingly fast rate to adapt to environment

A team of researchers who bred a species of brown African butterfly in the lab were shocked to discover that the offspring could turn purple in just six generations, or about a year.

Scientists have long known that butterflies are sensitive to changes in their environment and can evolve new colors if it suits them. But until now, no one knew how the fragile insects were able to pull this off.

Such a speedy evolution is "amazing," said study co-author Hui Cao, a physicist at Yale University. "Within one year they look purple—I could not believe it, to be honest."

In the laboratory, the team bred the butterfly *Bicyclus anynana*, which lives for about two months. They used microscopes to determine which individual butterflies' wings best reflected light of the wavelength that produces purple.

**Read the full, original story: [Butterflies can evolve new colors amazingly fast](#)**