

Help Support Monarch Butterfly Conservation

In Barnstable



Did you know? :

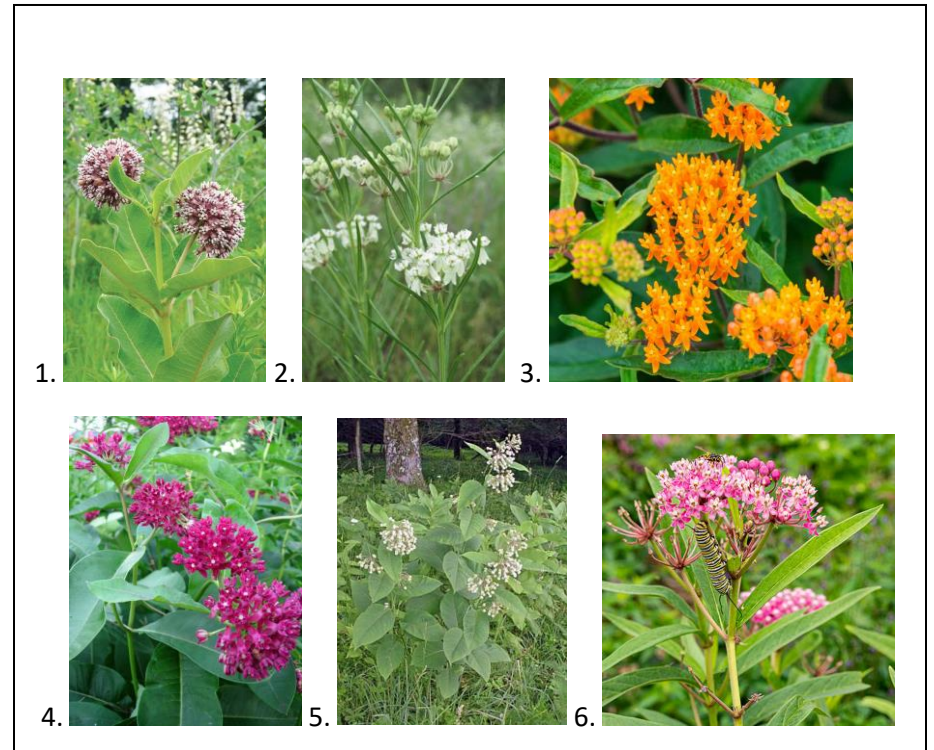
The presence of the milkweed plant is essential for Monarch Breeding. Monarch Butterfly larvae feed almost exclusively on Milkweed & adults prefer to lay eggs on milkweed species. Therefore, Monarch Butterfly biology is linked directly to the Milkweed plant.

HOW? : **BY PLANTING NATIVE MILKWEED SPECIES**

Monarch butterflies can often be seen on the Cape in the summer. By encouraging the cultivation of native milkweed meadows and similar habitat for Monarchs and other pollinator species on public & private land throughout Barnstable we can all take part in assisting this incredible species bounce back from their significant population decline since 1990.

6 Native Milkweed Varieties Which Can Be Found in Massachusetts

1. **Common Milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*) - Adult monarch butterflies will only lay their eggs on members of the milkweed family.
2. **Whorled Milkweed** (*Asclepias verticillata*) – Most widely distributed milkweed in MA. Spreads rapidly from rhizome root structure.
3. **Butterfly Weed** (*Asclepias Tuberosa*) – One of the most vibrantly colored & aesthetically pleasing varieties of milkweed. Highly drought tolerant.
4. **Purple Milkweed** (*Asclepias purpurascens*) – This milkweed variety is considered endangered in MA, however, it is a vital host species for the Monarch Butterfly. Planting this species will aid mutual conservation of both species.
5. **Poke Milkweed** (*Asclepias exalta*) – This milkweed species can grow in partial shade unlike most, which prefer full sun.
6. **Swamp Milkweed** (*Asclepias incarnata*) – This variety of milkweed grows in low lying or wet areas, such as stream banks, ditches, bogs, marshes. Requires full sun for optimal growth.



Other Native MA Planting Suggestions for Pollinator Gardens

Species:

- **Joe-Pye Weed** (*Eupatorium maculatum*)
- **Common Boneset** (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)
- **Wild Carrot or Queen Anne's Lace** (*Daucus carota*)

Family or Genus:

- **Members of the Goldenrod genus** (*Solidago*)
- **Members of the Cone Flower genus** (*Echinacea*)
- **Members of the Aster family** (*Aster*)

Threats to Monarch Butterfly Populations

Some of the primary threats to Monarch Butterfly populations include loss of habitat, depletion of their host plant distribution, and unfavorable land management practices on public and private land throughout the Monarch Butterfly's range. A 2015 article by the *Washington Post* indicated that since 1990 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recorded a major decline in numbers of Monarch Butterflies visiting the overwintering sites in California and Mexico each year. The article pointed to the use of herbicides and pesticides on agricultural and private land in California as a primary driver of the Monarch's decline in the U.S. In Mexico, illegal logging contributed largely to the loss of habitat in areas in the Monarch Butterfly overwintering areas.

Conservation Efforts

The Town of Barnstable has joined the National Wildlife Federation Mayors Monarch Pledge, which is a commitment by Towns & Cities across the country to promote healthy and sustainable land management for Monarch Butterflies on both public and private land. By joining this movement, Barnstable is committing to promoting planting of native milkweed species and other native food sources for pollinators on public land throughout Barnstable as well as providing educational outreach to the community so that private landowners can successfully do the same. By cultivating "Butterfly Gardens" with varieties of native milkweed and other food sources throughout Barnstable, the Town will create vital "waystations" for migrating Monarch Butterflies to assist them in surviving their long journey and have successful breeding.

Citations :

Photos:

1. "PHEASANTS FOREVER LEADS THE NATIONAL CHARGE PUTTING MILKWEED IN THE GROUND, AND IT BENEFITS MUCH MORE THAN GAME BIRDS" By Tom Carpenter <https://www.pheasantsforever.org/BlogLanding/Blogs/Field-Notes/Milkweed-is-for-the-Birds-%E2%80%A6-and-Butterflies-and-Be.aspx>
2. "Common Milkweed – *Asclepias syriaca*" Prairie Nursery. <https://www.prairienursery.com/common-milkweed-asclepias-syriaca.html>
3. "MILKWEED-WHORLED (*ASCLEPIAS VERTICILLATA*) (FLORIDA NATIVE)" Whitwam Organics. <https://whitwamorganics.com/products/milkweed-whorled?variant=15448558731309b>
4. "Butterfly Weed – Butterfly Weed For Sale" Spring Hill Nurseries. <https://www.springhillnursery.com/product/butterfly-weed>
5. "Asclepias purpurascens Purple Milkweed" Prairie Moon Nursery. <https://www.prairiemoon.com/asclepias-purpurascens-purple-milkweed-prairie-moon-nursery.html>
6. Broyles, Steve. (June 2008) "A Peaceful Gem Hiding in Our Woods". Finger Lakes Native Plant Society. <https://flnps.org/native-plants/peaceful-gem-hiding-our-woods>
7. "Swamp Milkweed – *Asclepias incarnate* seeds" Select Seeds. https://www.selectseeds.com/milkweed-asclepias/swamp_milkweed_seeds.aspx

Research:

1. Ackery, P. R. & Vane-Wright, R. I. 1984. Milkweed butterflies, their cladistics and biology, being an account of the natural history of the Danainae, a subfamily of the Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae.
2. "6 TYPES OF MILKWEED YOU CAN PLANT IN MASSACHUSETTS (AND ONE TO AVOID!)" By Bird Watching HQ <https://birdwatchinghq.com/milkweed-in-massachusetts/#:~:text=Purple%20Milkweed%20is%20one%20of,Monarchs%20and%20many%20other%20butterflies.>
3. "Nectar Plants for Butterflies & Other Pollinators" (PDF). Plants for Butterfly and Pollinator Gardens: Native and Non-native Plants Suitable for Gardens in the Northeastern United States. Monarch Watch.
4. Fears, Darryl. (August 26, 2015). "As pesticides wipe out Monarch butterflies in the U.S., illegal logging is doing the same in Mexico". *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/08/26/nearly-a-billion-monarch-butterflies-have-vanished-now-their-haven-in-mexico-is-also-disappearing/>
5. "About the Mayor's Monarch Pledge". National Wildlife Federation. <https://www.nwf.org/MayorsMonarchPledge/About>
6. Landis, Thomas D.; Dumroese, R. Kasten (2015). "Propagating Native Milkweeds for Restoring Monarch Butterfly Habitat" (PDF). *International Plant Propagators' Society, Combined Proceedings (2014)*