



MONARCH BUTTERFLY: MOST WIDELY RECONIZED OF ALL AMERICAN BUTTERFLIES

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BY SHERRY FINDLEY

GET OFF TO A FLYING START

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Spring is an extremely important time for Monarch Butterflies. The over wintering populations will soon be heading North to lay their first Monarch eggs of the season. These butterflies need new milkweed to feed the Caterpillars. They also need nectar flowers to inspire weary females to lay eggs for future generations. It's very important to provide the returning migration generation the **BREAKFAST** it needs for a productive season. Here is a list of plants to consider for your garden that would complete their need for survival and a healthy productive season.

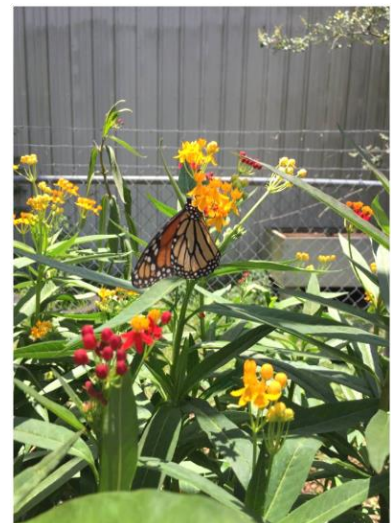
1. Native Milkweed
2. Swamp milkweed
3. Salvia (May Night)

4. Chives
5. Siberian Wallflower
6. Dill
7. Parsley
8. Spider Milkweed

There are many other beautiful plants you can add to your butterfly garden, that will attract not only butterflies but humming birds as well. Here are just a few:

1. Buddleia
2. Phlox
3. Marigolds
4. Zinnias
5. Kaleidoscope
6. Purple Cone Flower
7. Black Eye Susan
8. Shrimp Plants

NATIVE MILKWEED



Milkweed is named for its milky, latex sap which contains alkaloids and cardenolides. These are complex chemicals that make the plants unpalatable to most animals. When purchasing Milkweed or any other butterfly plants, be sure to ask for plants that have **not** been treated with pesticides. This may make them toxic to Monarchs and other insects. Here at Liberty Landscape Supply, our Milkweed is always pesticide free.



MONARCH BUTERFLIES

Monarch Butterflies have distinct orange, black, and white wings. Their coloring sends a warning to predators that the Monarch is foul tasting and poisonous. They can be found throughout the US, México, and Canada.



North American Monarch Conservation Plan

Recommends planting Native Milkweed species to restore breeding habitat.



BEHAVIOR

MONARCHS CAN PRODUCE FOUR GENERATIONS FOR ONE SUMMER.

Adult Monarch get their nutrients from the nectar of the flowers. Monarch Larvae feed almost exclusively on Milkweed.

The first three generations have a life span of 2-6 weeks and will continue moving north. As they move north, they will mate again and have the next generation. That will continue the northward migration. The fourth generation is different, and they can live up to 9 months. These are the butterflies that will migrate south for the winter either to Mexico or southern California.

Threats to Monarch Butterflies:

Monarchs can survive below freezing temperatures, if they are dry. However, if they are wet and the temperature drops the caterpillar will freeze to death.

As our world warms, suitable habitat will begin to move northward resulting in a longer migration. The Monarch Caterpillar may be forced to adapt and even produce a 5th generation to reach even further north.

Because hundreds of millions of Monarchs migrate to roost for the winter to either southern California or Mexico. (Eastern population migrate to Sierra Nevada Mexico and Western population migrate to Southern California.) If a cold snap would happen in Sierra Nevada, it would be devastating.

Other Threats to our Monarchs

1. Habitat loss
2. Loss of Milkweed
3. Illegal logging in Mexico

Therefore it is crucial that we plant native Milkweed. There are few commercial sources of plants and seeds currently in the southeast. The non-native or scarlet milkweed (*Asclepias Curassavia*) is the most widely available species in the south east. However, scientists are concerned that it has negative impacts on Monarchs.

**The Florida Museum of Natural History,
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation,
Butterfly Conservation
Initiative and**

Monarch Joint venture are all working together to produce reliable sources of Native Milkweed. Inventory is expected to increase steadily over next several years.