



What You Can Do To Help Monarch Butterflies

Source: themonarchultra.com



The Issue

Monarch butterflies are in steep decline, with populations dropping by up to 90% in the last 20 years. There is much you can do to help and support monarchs and reduce their decline. Your help benefits not only monarch butterflies but also all insect pollinators, which are vital to our food supply and the health of our ecosystem.

Ways to Support Monarch Conservation

1. Protect Monarch Habitat

- Create and preserve pollinator habitats, including planting milkweed and other nectar-rich plants.
- You can help to maintain native plant habitats locally by volunteering for Friends of Second Marsh plant stewardship initiatives. For more information go to secondmarsh.ca.
- Use nature-friendly products and avoid using pesticides and herbicides that can harm pollinators.

2. Learn More

- Join [Journey North](http://JourneyNorth) citizen scientists as they track monarch butterfly migration each fall and spring.
- Visit themonarchultra.com website fundraising page to learn more about supporting the Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary in Zitácuaro, Mexico.
- For more information about pollinators, visit the [Pollinator Partnership Canada](http://PollinatorPartnershipCanada) website.



3. Raise Awareness

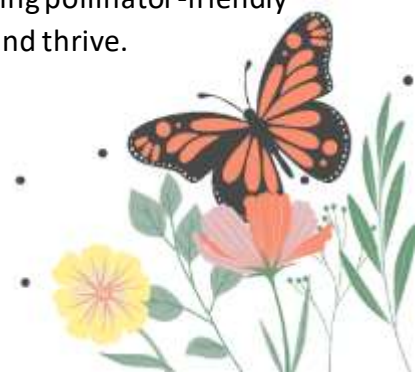
- Share the message of monarch conservation with friends and family.
- Support organizations committed to safeguarding pollinators and biodiversity.
- Spread the word that milkweed plants are a beneficial host for the monarch butterfly.

What's so Special About Milkweed?



Milkweed a superpower plant in the world of pollinators. It is the only host plant capable of sustaining monarch larvae so to support monarchs plant milkweed! Three species are native to Ontario - Common Milkweed, Swamp Milkweed, Butterfly Milkweed.

Monarchs usually lay only one egg per plant to ensure each new larva has plenty to eat. We need gardeners, schools and municipalities across North America to get involved by planting milkweed and creating pollinator-friendly habitats for monarchs and other pollinators to survive and thrive.





Pollinator Gardens

Plant a pollinator garden. It does not need to be in the ground; flowers and vegetables in containers on your balcony or deck can still attract pollinators. A sunny location is best.

- **Plant mostly native species**
 - Native pollinators co-evolved with native plants. These plants are also best suited to our climate.
- **Choose a variety of colours, sizes, shapes and bloom times**
 - Pollinators emerge and are active at different times of the year, so provide a mixture of spring-summer and fall-blooming flowers with a range of sizes, shapes and colours.
- **Provide larval host plants for caterpillars**
 - Butterflies lay their eggs on specific plants so that their caterpillars will have food. Monarchs require milkweed, while swallowtails love dill.
- **Let your dandelions and clover grow**
 - These plants are essential early food sources for bumblebees and other pollinators emerging from their long winter hibernation. Let them grow on your lawn until they go to seed so they can support these pollinators early in the spring.
- **Provide a water source**
 - A shallow dish filled with water will support pollinators during the hot summer months. Add small stones on which pollinators can land.
- **Build nesting sites**
 - Building bee hotels and other structures where pollinators can lay their eggs is easy.
- **Don't use pesticides**
 - Pesticides don't just kill pests, they also kill pollinators. Pests attract ladybugs and other control insects, but if they become a problem use a soap-based spray.
- **Don't rake all your leaves in the fall**
 - Some pollinators overwinter under dead leaves. Leave them in your garden until late spring or all year. Worms and other decomposers will turn them into soil.

Monarch Waystation

Help monarch butterflies on their epic migration journey! A Monarch Waystation is a garden that provides the milkweed, nectar plants and shelter essential for monarchs to survive and thrive during their migration across North America. These habitats are certified and registered by Monarch Watch and play a critical role in conserving this iconic species.

