

# How To Make a Monarch Habitat

## NEW ENGLAND



Monarchs arrive to breed in the Northeast in mid-summer. Monarchs need two types of plants: milkweed for the caterpillars and nectar-producing flowering plants for adults. **The milkweed is critical, since the caterpillars will only eat milkweed.** Adults will eat many types of nectar-producing flowering plants, but you must ensure that the plants in your garden are flowering when the monarchs are flying over your area. Choose native plants that will attract other pollinators, as well.

---

### - Example Nectar Plants -

#### **Goldenrods (Gray, Stiff, Wrinkleleaf)**

- Full sun
- Clay to sandy soil

#### **Asters (New England and Calico varieties)**

- Full sun, loamy soil

#### **Field Thistle (*Cirsium discolor*)**

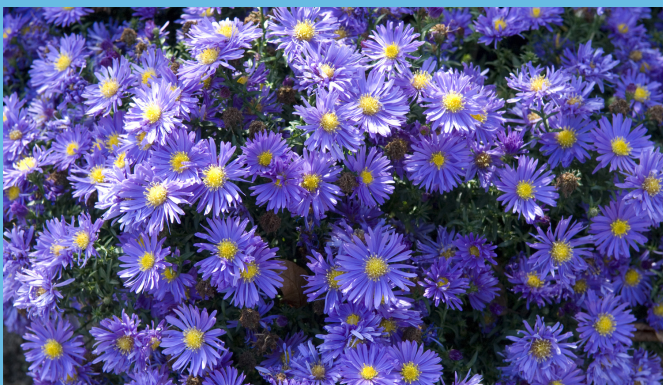
- Full sun to partial shade
- Average to dry soil moisture

#### **Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)**

- Full sun to partial shade
- Moist to wet soil

#### **Trumpetweed / Hollow stemmed Joe-Pye Weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*)**

- Full to light sun, moist soil



### - Milkweed Plants -

#### **Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)**

- Full sun to part shade; good for urban soils

#### **Swamp or Pink Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)**

- Up to five feet tall
- Full sun, moist

#### **Clasping Milkweed (*Asclepias amplexicaulis*)**

- Full to partial sun
- Sandy to rocky soil

#### **Whorled Milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*)**

- Full sun, moist to dry; good for urban areas

#### **Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)\***

- Up to three feet tall
- Sandy or drier soil

\*Not to be confused with Butterfly Bush, an invasive that you should not plant.

Do **NOT** use Tropical milkweed; it is an invasive and might be bad for monarchs.

# Example Habitats

There are several ways to make an inviting garden for Monarchs. And even a small space can work! And remember to never, ever use pesticides on plants that Monarchs may eat.

## CONTAINER GARDEN

For those of you with limited space, a container garden is ideal. Plant both your milkweed and your flowering plants in plastic pots. Larger pots are preferable, as these plants have large root systems that need space to grow. Be sure to check soil moisture regularly, as containers dry faster than the ground. You may also overwinter your containers in an unheated garage or shed.

See [here](#) for more tips on creating a monarch container garden.



## LARGER MONARCH HABITAT

If you have the space, you can plant a larger monarch garden in the ground. First you must remove all grasses and weeds. Then plant one or more types of milkweed, depending on the sun and soil conditions of your garden. Also add nectar-producing flowering plants, making sure that some are flowering when monarchs are expected in your area. You may also add a “butterfly bath.” You can buy them commercially or make your own using a shallow dish with sand covering the bottom, adding just enough water to cover the sand.

See [here](#) for more information on creating a larger habitat.

## Places to buy milkweed and nectar plants

Note: we suggest buying small milkweed plants. Milkweed seeds require cold stratification, which means that they will not germinate unless exposed to cold temperatures that slowly warm.

[Prairie Moon](#), will ship nationally

[American Meadows](#), will ship nationally

[Pinelands Nursery](#), Columbus, NJ (will ship)

[Toadshade Wildflower Farm](#), Frenchtown, NJ

[Eastern Monarch Butterfly Farm](#), Buffalo, NY (only sells seeds)

[Long Island Native Plant Initiative](#), Hampton Bays, NY

[Native Haunts](#), Alfred, ME

[Tripple Brook Farm](#), near Springfield, ME