

Monarchs in Michigan

mi.gov/monarchs

Michigan Pollinator Health Begins with You

Monarch butterflies are one of the most recognizable and beloved butterflies in North and Central America. Millions of monarchs migrate across the United States, spending their summers in Michigan and winters in Mexico. Unfortunately, eastern monarch populations have declined by 90% due to habitat loss and the improper use of insecticides. And monarchs aren't alone- other pollinators, such as bumble bees, are also experiencing declines. Use these simple tips, and recommended plant species, to make your garden a great place for pollinators!

Select Native Plants

Native plants provide variety and beauty to any garden! Native species are resilient and adapted to local soils, climate, and pests reducing the need for supplemental watering and fertilization. Additionally, blooms produced by native plants offer pollinators higher quality and more beneficial nectar than hybrid plant varieties.

Select for Plant Diversity

Monarchs are present in Michigan from late spring through early fall; so, it is important to provide a variety of plants that bloom May through September as consistent food sources. Gardens should contain 10 or more of the recommended plant species, with at least three species per bloom period. Three to four percent of your garden should be comprised of milkweed. Milkweeds are essential host plants for monarch caterpillars and milkweed nectar supports adult monarchs, as well as other pollinators. In Michigan, two thirds of the milkweed used should be common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) and the remaining third of the milkweed should be butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) for well drained, sandy soil or swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnate*) for rich, wetter soils. Gardens should also include a few local grasses, such as little blue stem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) or indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), to provide shelter and safety for feeding monarchs as well as structural support for the flowering plants.

Avoid Pesticides

Insecticides have their place in a garden, but if you are trying to help monarchs and other pollinators, it's best to avoid them. Many herbicides, and all insecticides, have the potential to poison or kill pollinators, including monarchs. Avoid using plants treated with systemic insecticides, which are absorbed as the plant grows, distributing the chemicals throughout the plant tissue and into the pollen and nectar. These insecticides include imidacloprid, dinotefuran, clothianidin, and thiamethoxam. If you are purchasing

plants from nurseries or garden centers, always ask whether the plants have been treated with insecticides.

[Graphic: Michigan Department of Natural Resources logo]

Recommended Plants for Michigan Pollinators

Species Name	Common Name	Monarch Value	Pollinator Value	Bloom Color	Height (feet)	Sun Requirements	Water Requirements	Flowering Season
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp Milkweed	Very High	Very High	Pink	3-4	High, Medium	High, Medium	Middle, Late
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Common Milkweed	Very High	Very High	White to Purple	2-3	High, Medium	Medium, Low	Middle, Late
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Weed	Very High	Very High	Orange	1-3	High	Medium, Low	Middle, Late
<i>Aster laevis</i>	Smooth Aster	High	High	Lavender	2-4	High	Medium, Low	Late
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	New England Aster	Very High	High	Purple	3-6	High	Medium, Low	Late
<i>Baptisia alba (macrophylla)</i>	White Wild Indigo	Low	High	White	2-4	Medium	High, Medium	Early, Middle
<i>Coreopsis lanceolate</i>	Lance-Leafed Coreopsis	High	Medium	Yellow	1-2	High, Medium	Medium, Low	Early
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower	High	High	Pink to Purple	1-2	High, Medium	Medium, Low	Middle
<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	Oxeye Sunflower	Medium	High	Yellow	3-4	High	Medium	Middle, Late
<i>Liatriis spicata</i>	Dense Blazing Star	Very High	High	Pink	3-4	High	Medium, Low	Middle, Late
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild Bergamot	Very High	Very High	Lavender	2-4	High	High, Medium	Middle
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Foxglove Beardtongue	Low	Very High	White	1-2	High	Medium, Low	Early, Middle
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Yellow Coneflower	High	High	Yellow	3-5	High, Medium	High, Medium	Middle
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan	High	Medium	Yellow	1-3	High, Medium	Low	Middle, Late
<i>Solidago rigida</i>	Stiff Goldenrod	Very High	High	Yellow	2-5	High	Medium, Low	Late
<i>Tradescantia ohioensis</i>	Spiderwort	Low	Very High	Blue	1-2	High, Medium	Medium	Early
<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	Culver's Root	High	High	White	3-5	High, Medium	Medium, Low	Middle

Pollinator Friendly Native Grasses

Species Name	Common Name	Height (feet)	Sun Requirements	Water Requirements
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big bluestem	3-6	High, Medium	Low
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	3-5	High, Medium	Medium, Low
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little bluestem	2-3	High, Medium	Medium, Low
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Prairie Dropseed	2-3	High	Medium, Low
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass	3-5	High, Medium	Medium, Low