

Below are several frequently asked questions about monarch butterflies

WHEN DO MONARCHS ARRIVE IN THE TULSA AREA AND LEAVE?

Northern migration from Mexico usually starts in March. They arrive from late March to mid-June; each year is different. The final generations of Monarchs are migratory and fly back to Mexico in September and October.

WHAT CAN I DO TO INCREASE THE MONARCH POPULATION?

Plant nectar and milkweed plants, provide water, and create a Monarch Garden, Habitat or Waystation.

WHY MILKWEED PLANTS?

Monarch butterflies lay eggs only on milkweed plants; their caterpillars/larvae feed only on milkweed plants.

WHAT IS NECTAR?

Sugar-rich liquid produced in flowers and elsewhere in a plant.

SHOULD I SOW SEEDS OR PLANT MILKWEED PLANTS?

Plants generally have a higher success rate than seeds. Larger areas may require seeding.

SHOULD I PLANT PLANTS NATIVE OR NOT NATIVE TO OKLAHOMA?

If sowing into a natural area, native plants should be used. In the home garden, both native and non-native plants are suitable.

SHOULD I PLANT ANNUALS OR PERENNIALS?

Both are OK.

WHAT IS AN ANNUAL?

A plant that dies each year, many shed seeds which emerge the next year

WHAT IS A PERENNIAL?

A plant that lives two years or longer

WHEN SHOULD I SOW MILKWEED PLANT SEEDS?

Sow outside in fall or spring, or start seeds inside in mid-February for planting mid-March or April. Instructions are at monarchwatch.org/milkweed/prop.htm.

WHEN SHOULD I PLANT?

Plants are available usually by April. Perennials can be planted as late as October.

WHERE SHOULD I SOW OR PLANT?

In an area that receives at least 6 hours of sun a day. Well-drained, light soils are better than those with clay. You may add peat, aged compost, or rotted leaves. Herbicides are not butterfly friendly.

HOW MANY MILKWEED PLANTS SHOULD I PLANT?

One or more; there is no upper limit. If planting more than one, include multiple species. A Certified Monarch Waystation must have at least three species.

WHERE CAN I GET MILKWEED PLANTS AND SEEDS?

You may find plants at monarchwatch.org, at nurseries, farmer's markets, and spring gardening events, and on eBay, Amazon.com, and other internet sites. For seeds, shop monarchwatch.org, elsewhere online, or check with the Tulsa City-County Library Seed Exchange and Oxley Nature Center. Verify that plants and seeds are 100% pesticide free (no pesticides, including organic pesticides, are butterfly friendly.)

HOW AND WHEN CAN I HARVEST MILKWEED SEEDS?

Seeds can be harvested when pods begin to pop open. If harvested too soon, the seeds will not be viable.

WHAT IS A CERTIFIED MONARCH WAYSTATION?

Details are under Monarch Waystation Program at monarchwatch.org. Certification shows that you are contributing to Monarch conservation. Upon certification, your site will be included in the International Monarch Waystation Registry, an online listing of Monarch Waystations, and you will be awarded a certificate bearing your name and your site's unique Monarch Waystation ID number. You can purchase a waterproof sign to display on your site.

For information on harvesting:

Visit monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/milkweed/harvesting-milkweed.

Seeds may be donated to:

tulsalibrary.org/tags/tccl-seed-library