

# Fly into action

## *How you can help the monarch butterfly*



With a single flap of fragile wings, the monarch butterfly embarks on a 3,000-mile journey of endurance each August starting in the northern United States and southern Canada as they return to their overwintering grounds in Mexico and the California coast. Monarchs are an extraordinary phenomenon worthy of understanding and protecting but they face many challenges, including habitat loss.

Even small efforts can add great value for monarchs and other pollinators. Here are ways you can help make a future filled with more monarch butterflies.

### **Plant with pollinators in mind**

Simple actions like planting native milkweed and flowers can have a great impact. This can come in the form of butterfly gardens, milkweed along roadsides, prairie habitat and many others. You don't need a large plot of land. If you don't have a backyard, a balcony planter will do.

Native milkweed and other flowering plants are essential for the monarch butterfly and support a diversity of pollinators with their abundance of nectars. Plant milkweed native to your area, look into swamp, butterfly, common, whorled and showy milkweeds as options. Search online to find pollinator-friendly plants that are native to your area these may include native varieties of aster, blazing star, coneflower, goldenrod and hyssop. Contact your local or state native plant society for help. Other resources for native plants include finding your local

native plant supplier or a resident horticulturalist to answer questions. Plant flowers native to your region, with blooms available from April through October.

Planting native species not only benefits pollinators but also benefits local water quality, improves soil health and enhances ecosystem resiliency.



*Vibrant orange blooms on butterfly milkweed in Minnesota.*

### **Garden wisely**

Hand-trim or remove pest-infested plants, unwanted plants and insect pests, and encourage native pest predators such as lacewings and lady beetles by growing organically to limit pesticide use.

### **Be a community scientist**

Community science is a collaborative effort where individuals in the community contribute to scientific research and data collection. Community scientists work alongside professional researchers to observe and record various aspects of the natural world. Take part in a community science project that focuses on pollinators and their host plants. Examples include International Monitoring Monarch Blitz, Journey North and the Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program. Some of these programs take place at national wildlife refuges. Contact your local national wildlife refuge to discover pollinator projects and monarch monitoring opportunities in your area.

### **Spread the word**

Be a voice for change by telling the monarch story to family, friends, community members and local and national leaders. Organize or participate in community events focused on monarch and pollinator conservation.

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
[fws.gov/monarch](https://fws.gov/monarch)  
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