

## Planting and Caring for Your Milkweed Plants

Congratulations on your purchase of Swamp Milkweed and/or Butterfly Milkweed landscape plugs! Though not large, these plugs have well-developed root systems that will help the plants get established and grow quickly.



Local native plants such as Butterfly Milkweed and Swamp Milkweed are suited to the soil and climate of our area. They do not need any fertilizer --in fact do better without -- because they are adapted to local conditions. Also, they rarely need extra water after becoming established. For each species select the planting location based on its requirements for sun, shade, and moisture. Here are requirements and descriptive details for these two milkweed species:



**Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)**; part to full sun, average to moist soil; more sun results in more flowers; height 3-4'; spread 2'; willow-like leaves 4-5" long; pink flowers June to August.



**Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)**; sun, dry to average soil; height 18"-24"; spread 2'; tough, drought-tolerant; slow to emerge in spring; taproot makes established plants difficult to transplant;

### Planting Your Landscape Plugs

1. Select the site/s for your plants based on the habitat requirements listed above.
2. Plant each species of milkweed in a group with individual plants about 12" apart. You'll be creating a patch of milkweeds that Monarch butterflies can easily find.
3. Dig a hole wider but no deeper than your landscape plug.
4. **Carefully extract your plug from its container.** Pulling on the crown of the plant can break roots at the stem. We suggest carefully pushing the plug out from the bottom,
5. Once extracted, if the root mass appears to be "tight", gently loosen the roots with your fingers.
6. Set the plant into the hole.
7. Fill in the hole around the plant with the soil that was removed from the hole. If the soil lacks organic matter, compost can be added or spread on top of the soil.
8. Immediately water thoroughly. Weekly watering for a few weeks should be sufficient until the plant is established. If the weather is sunny and hot, more frequent watering may be necessary.
9. Mulching around the plant, such as with shredded leaves, can help retain moisture.

## Gathering and Planting Milkweed Seeds

After flowering, your milkweed plants will set seeds within pods in late summer or early fall. If you would like to collect and plant the seeds to increase your milkweed supply, this website describes the process:

<http://ourhabitatgarden.org/creatures/milkweed-growing.html>

---

## More about Monarch Butterflies

We suggest you get your yard certified as a Monarch Waystation. See [www.monarchwatch.org](http://www.monarchwatch.org) for info on the Monarch Waystation program and to learn more about Monarchs. You can also participate in a Monarch tagging project run by Monarch Watch.

You can join a citizen science project to track the migration of Monarch butterflies. See Monarch Butterfly Journey North at: <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/>



---

## There's More You Can Do...

You can do more in your yard than help the Monarchs. You can help birds, other species of butterflies, moths, amphibians, and other creatures in our local web of life. By significantly increasing the number of native plants growing on your property, you will create a healthy ecosystem for wildlife. For more information check the *Backyards for Nature* blog at [www.backyardsfornature.org](http://www.backyardsfornature.org) and website at [www.valleyforgeaudubon.org/bfn](http://www.valleyforgeaudubon.org/bfn). For on-site advice about transforming your yard with native plants and other wildlife-friendly features, you can request a yard visit. See [www.valleyforgeaudubon.org/bfn/consulation](http://www.valleyforgeaudubon.org/bfn/consulation)