



What do you need to have a butterfly garden?

1. Larval food plants
2. Nectar plants
3. Pesticide free lawn & garden



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Top 10 Butterfly Plants

1. Echinacea (Coneflower)
2. Eupatorium (Joe Pye Weed)
3. Phlox
4. Asters
5. Vernonia (Ironweed)
6. Liatris
7. Verbena bonariensis
8. Gomphrena (Globe Amaranth)
9. Tithonia (Mexican Sunflower)
10. Zinnia

NATUREWORKS

How to Raise
Monarch Butterflies





How to Raise a Monarch Butterfly

Step 1: Plant Milkweed -

Monarch butterflies only lay eggs on milkweed plants. It is the sole food source of the monarch caterpillars, so it's really important to have a sufficient amount before deciding to raise monarch butterflies. There are many different types of *Asclepias* (milkweed) to choose from depending on your specific garden needs & requirements.

Asclepias syriaca (common milkweed)

Asclepias tuberosa (Butterfly weed)

Asclepias incarnata (swamp milkweed)

There are MANY types and monarchs will lay eggs on any *Asclepias* plants.

Step 2: Look for eggs -

Monarch butterfly eggs are somewhat difficult to find in the wild. Since it only takes 3-5 days for eggs to hatch, timing is crucial. The best sign is to watch for adult Monarchs stopping at milkweed plants. A female will usually lay only one egg per milkweed plant to ensure enough food for each larva.

The egg is usually laid on the underside of the leaf, and females prefer young plants. If you do find an egg, it is best to collect the entire plant, and put its stem in water as soon as possible. If necessary, you can just take the leaf on which it is resting. If Monarchs are reared in captivity, females will lay dozens of eggs on a single plant.



Step 3: Feed the Caterpillars Milkweed-

Once the larvae emerge, they will need fresh milkweed leaves. They won't eat any other plants, although they will eat many different species, or kinds, of milkweed. If the original plant is still fresh, it is easiest to just leave the larvae on this for a few days. They rarely crawl far during this time, and do not need to be put in a container until they are about four days old. If you are keeping larvae in individual containers, be sure to replace leaves when they turn dry, every one to two days. Leaves will keep longer if the stem is wrapped in a moist paper towel and then wrapped in tin foil or plastic wrap. Containers should be emptied of frass (larva waste) every day. Caterpillars will shed their skin 5 times before they pupate, usually taking 10-14 days.

Step 4: The Chrysalis - When larvae are ready to pupate, they crawl to the top of their cage, attach themselves with silken thread, and form a prepupal "J" before shedding their skin for the last time. This process is fun to watch but it happens quickly. You can tell that they will shed their larval skin soon (within minutes) when their tentacles hang very limply and their bodies straighten out a little. The pupa must hang for the butterfly to form properly.



Step 5: Release the Butterfly

Adults usually emerge in the mid-morning. When the pupa is very dark and the orange and black wings are visible, check it often to increase your chances of observing this amazing event. Monarchs that emerge in the morning can be released at the end of the day, or kept until the following day without needing to be fed. Those emerging in the afternoon should be released the next day. It is best if they are released on a warm sunny day, near flowers if possible. If it is colder than 60° F, they often cannot fly. Summer generation monarchs live 2-5 weeks and the migrating generation lives 8-9 months.

