



# Milkweeds for Monarchs

## The St. Louis Butterfly Project

### About the Initiative

The City of St. Louis Urban Vitality & Ecology Initiative is a citywide effort to help connect people and urban nature. The dual goals of ***Milkweeds for Monarchs: The St. Louis Butterfly Project*** are to (1) increase monarch butterfly habitat and (2) help people experience the splendor of monarchs where they live, work, learn and play. Milkweeds for Monarchs advances a priority in the Mayor's Sustainability Action Agenda: to foster an enhanced connection between people and urban natural resources. Access to nature can improve health and well-being, such as by reducing stress and anxiety, as well as provide important learning opportunities and outcomes. Milkweeds for Monarchs also aligns with the City's Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative, as creating monarch gardens is an opportunity to enhance neighborhood aesthetics and to build relationships between members of the community.

To launch the project in 2014, Mayor Slay arranged to have the City plant 50 monarch gardens, and challenged the community to plant an additional 200 monarch gardens to celebrate the City's 250th birthday. In 2015, Milkweeds for Monarchs will expand to more neighborhoods and schools in the City of St. Louis.

In partnership with community plant and butterfly experts, the City has created a number of tools and resources to assist in the creation and maintenance of monarch gardens. There is a **STL Monarch Mix** of recommended plants to serve as a reference in establishing your monarch garden. These native plants have been carefully selected to provide the best combination of features for the butterflies, as well as one's personal enjoyment. **STL Monarch Mix** plants bloom at different times of the growing season, offering seasonal color and important butterfly food and nectar sources for the spring and fall monarch migration.

For updated information about Milkweeds for Monarchs, opportunities and resources, and to register a monarch garden planted in the City of St. Louis, please visit [stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/](http://stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/).



Photo credit: North Creek Nursery

### Why Monarchs and Milkweed?

Famous for their remarkable 3,000 mile annual migration between Mexico and Canada, monarchs are important for their pollinator role in our ecosystem. Monarchs are iconic and easily recognizable; this makes them a unique symbol and educational tool for demonstrating the importance and joy of experiencing biodiversity in our everyday lives. The monarch butterfly population has declined more than 90 percent over the last two decades due to habitat loss and chemical use. Female monarchs depend on milkweed to lay their eggs and feed their caterpillar larvae. While other flower species can serve as nectar sources for butterflies, we need milkweeds to play host to monarch caterpillars so the monarch population can grow.



This is an initiative of the City of St. Louis Office of Sustainability.  
For more information on this or other sustainability initiatives in the City of St. Louis,  
Contact Catherine Werner, Sustainability Director, Office of the Mayor  
WernerC@stlouis-mo.gov or visit [stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability](http://stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/)



# Planting Your Monarch Garden

## Supplies

To create a monarch garden, you will need the following materials:

- Approximately 1 square meter of soil that receives at least six hours of direct sunlight per day. One square meter is roughly 3 ft x 3 ft. If you prefer a rectangular layout, it will be roughly 2 ft x 5 ft.
- 1 pot or container of each plant species suggested in the **STL Monarch Mix**. Recommended: at least 4 milkweed plants (2 different species) plus 5 nectar plants (3 different species).
- Garden trowel or shovel
- Mulch (optional, but recommended)

## Planting Instructions

1. Divide the area to be planted into nine squares, placing each plant about 12" from its neighbor. A rectangular layout is suggested to the right.
2. In the middle of each square, dig a hole roughly 6 inches deep and wide enough to fit the plant plug. A good rule of thumb is to dig a hole slightly larger than the container the plant plug came in.
3. Gently break up the roots of each plant plug and place the plants in the holes. Fill in lightly with soil.
4. Cover the entire monarch garden with a light layer of mulch.
5. Water your garden immediately, and then water daily.
6. After a couple of weeks, water every few days. Because these plants are native, they should only need occasional watering once they are established.
7. Register your monarch garden at [stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/](http://stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/) so we can track and map the project's progress.
8. Contact [WernerC@stlouis-mo.gov](mailto:WernerC@stlouis-mo.gov) to obtain a free Milkweeds for Monarchs yard sign for the registered garden.

## Reminders

- Do not use pesticides or chemical fertilizers on or near your monarch garden.
- These flowers are likely to bloom at different times, and they may take a year or two to get established.
- Consult the **Plant Care Tips** sheet found online for ongoing maintenance of your garden.

## STL Monarch Mix of Recommended Plants

WhorledMilkweed



*Asclepias verticillata*  
Blooms June-July, White

PurpleConeflower



*Echinacea purpurea*  
Blooms June-Aug, Pale Purple

Goldenrod



*Solidago drummondii*  
Blooms Aug-Sept, Yellow

Black-EyedSusan



*Rudbeckia fulgida*  
Blooms June-Oct, Orange-Yellow

ButterflyWeed



*Asclepias tuberosa*  
Blooms June-July, Orange

Plant these taller species in the rear



CommonMilkweed\*



*Asclepias syriaca*  
Blooms June-Aug, Light Pink

Swamp/MarshMilkweed



*Asclepias incarnata*  
Blooms July-Aug, Pink

Bee Balm/Bergamot



Native Monarda Species  
Blooms July-Sept, Lavender

NewEnglandAster\*



*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*  
Blooms Aug-Sept, Pink-Purple

\* Some plants can grow to be very large, so they should either be placed in the back of the garden or in a location where they can be managed.

Photos courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden and Monarch Watch