

AUGUST 01 - 14, 2020 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

MILKWEEDS - ASCLEPIAS



Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*, found throughout the Northeast in fields and meadows.
© Dick Harlow

Milkweed is considered a weed by many people. However, there also are others who consider Milkweed as an interesting and colorful flowering perennial. And, then there are those who support the gardening of Milkweeds of various species because they provide the fodder for the Monarch butterfly larva!

However, increasing human population has necessitated the need for developers to create homes and businesses. As a result, wildlife including the Monarch Butterfly, are increasingly at risk from becoming scarce, or a rarity or to be eliminated from the landscape.



Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*, pod- seeds that form after flowering. © Dick Harlow

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Butterfly Weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, Orange and yellow perennial variations, © Dick Harlow



Butterfly Weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, close-up of the flowers, © Dick Harlow



Butterfly Weed *Asclepias tuberosa*, long cylindrical pod and seeds that form after flowering. © Dick Harlow

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The removal of many plants, e.g. milkweed, from the clearing of land or by plowing, or from herbicides, are furthering the eventual extinction of this beautiful butterfly. Therefore, help the Monarch Butterfly by planting various species of milkweed in your garden.

There are 12 native species of Milkweed found throughout North America, all used by Monarch butterfly larva. I will focus on those species that are primarily found from the Mid-West to the East coast. You have already been introduced to Butterfly Weed.



Showy, Swamp, Rose Milkweed, various names for this beautiful rose-colored Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*, © Dick Harlow

Although this milkweed grows in swamps and is a reason it got one of its common names, it also can grow in gardens. It does add interest and beautiful color to your garden as well as supplying necessary food for Monarch larva.

Most people are familiar with the seed heads of Milkweeds. Some are narrow and some are fuller like the one shown here. All the seeds are very similar and as one can see when fluffed out can be moved some distance by the wind.

There are other milkweed species, but the three species shown here are the foremost species of milkweeds in the East for helping the Monarch Butterfly!



Showy, Swamp, Rose Milkweed, close-up of the individual flower, *Asclepias incarnata*, © Dick Harlow

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OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

- Gray Squirrel
- Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

REPTILES

- Garter Snakes

AMPHIBIANS

- Leopard Frog
- American Bull Frog
- Green Frog

BUTTERFLIES

- Cabbage White
- Clouded Sulphur
- Common Wood Nymph, Northern
- Common Wood Nymph, Southern
- Monarch
- Viceroy
- Pearl Crescent
- Eastern Tailed-Blue

MOTHS

Hummingbird Moth

Weather Tidbits

Month of AUGUST 01-14, 2020

All Measurements taken at solar noon (1230 EST).

PRECIPITATION

Average August Precipitation for Vermont = 4.3 inches.

Two Weeks Precipitation = 74.4 mm or 2.9 inches. 1.4 inch deficit.

Overcast Days: 5