

SWAMP MILKWEED



1, Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*,
Longshot, © Dick Harlow

According to references or the internet ***Asclepias incarnata*** was named for the Greek God of medicine Asklepios; whereas part of the word incarnata is from the Latin **carn** meaning flesh, and **atus** is for the flesh or rose color.

This plant is moisture loving so one may wonder why I would grow this plant in a garden that is not a wet garden. The answer is simple; I like the color and looks of the flower head, plus milkweed is a staple for the Monarch butterfly. I happen to enjoy Monarch butterflies!

The actual habitat for this species is in bogs, freshwater marshes, fens along stream banks wherever there is water. I have to admit I do water it in my garden, but not overly so.

The flowers are fragrant and their color ranges from pink, mauve to dark pink almost a red-violet combination.

The Monarch butterfly only lays its eggs on or under a milkweed leaf. The primary milkweed varieties in the East are Orange (Butterfly) Milkweed, Swamp (Rose) Milkweed, and Common Milkweed. When the eggs hatch the larva feed solely on milkweed leaves and sap. The sap is toxic to other organisms because of the chemicals in the sap.

AUGUST 1- 14, 2021 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
By Dick Harlow



2, Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*,
close-up of the flower head, © Dick Harlow

That toxic sap ingested in the larva gives the larva and adult butterfly a nasty indigestible taste to other organisms. Consequently, once an organism samples a Monarch butterfly and has to regurgitate the remains of the butterfly that individual predator will never touch another Monarch as long as it lives. Also, that organism will never touch any other butterfly that looks like a Monarch. The Viceroy, which has the same colors as a Monarch, benefits and is very thankful.

NORTHERN LEOPARD FROG



Northern Leopard Frog, *Rana pipiens*,
Green Morph. © Dick Harlow

The Northern Leopard Frog is a native to parts of Canada and the United States. It is Vermont's state amphibian and considered a member of the true frog family.

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This amphibian has several different color variations called morphs within the species. Here you see two variations, green and brown. There is also a burnsi morph and a very rare albino.



Northern Leopard Frog, *Rana pipiens*.
Brown Morph. © Dick Harlow

The Northern Leopard Frog breeds in spring whether that occurs in March or doesn't happen until June. At any rate their breeding period is during those months.

This species is found in several habitats. You will find them in North Pond, South Pond or your garden, plus lawns, swamps, and marshes.

In the 1970's the United States and Canadian populations of Northern Leopard Frogs began declining. Unfortunately, scientists are not sure why but are concerned that several issues might be the reason. Those issues range from contaminants either chemical or environmental as well as habitat loss, plus introduced predatory fish as well as disease. So far the overall population statistics for this species has not recovered as yet.

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

Red Fox
Meadow Vole

REPTILES

Garter Snake

BUTTERFLIES

Black Swallowtail, male
Cabbage White
Clouded Sulphur
Monarch
Viceroy

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All Measurements taken at solar noon (1230 EST).

PRECIPITATION

Average August Precipitation for Vermont = 3.9 inches.

Total precipitation for the first two weeks in August was 32.2 mm or 1.3 inches. This is a 2.6 deficit that needs to be made up if we are to break even for the month.

Overcast Days 1-14: We had 7-days, of overcast skies. Of those overcast skies 5 days produced rain.