



**Monarchs**  
in Michigan

[mi.gov/monarchs](http://mi.gov/monarchs)

## TIPS

# Michigan Pollinator Health Begins with You

Monarch butterflies are one of the most recognizable and beloved butterflies in North and Central America. Millions of monarchs migrate across the United States, spending their summers in Michigan and winters in Mexico. Unfortunately, eastern monarch populations have declined by 90% due to habitat loss and the improper use of insecticides. And monarchs aren't alone - other pollinators, such as bumble bees, are also experiencing declines.

Use these simple tips, and **recommended plant species**, to make your garden a great place for pollinators!

# 1

## Select Native Plants

Native plants provide variety and beauty to any garden! Native species are resilient and adapted to local soils, climate, and pests reducing the need for supplemental watering and fertilization. Additionally, blooms produced by native plants offer pollinators higher quality and more beneficial nectar than hybrid plant varieties.

# 2

## Select for Plant Diversity

Monarchs are present in Michigan from late spring through early fall; so, it is important to provide a variety of plants that bloom May through September as consistent food sources.

Gardens should contain 10 or more of the recommended plant species, with at least three species per bloom period.

Three to four percent of your garden should be comprised of milkweed. Milkweeds are essential host plants for monarch caterpillars and milkweed nectar supports adult monarchs, as well as other pollinators. In Michigan, two thirds of the milkweed used should be **common milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*) and the remaining third should be **butterfly milkweed** (*Asclepias tuberosa*) for well drained, sandy soil or **swamp milkweed** (*Asclepias incarnate*) for rich, wetter soils. Gardens should also include a few local grasses, such as little blue stem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) or indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), to provide shelter and safety for feeding monarchs as well as structural support for the flowering plants.

# 3

## Avoid Pesticides

Insecticides have their place in a garden, but if you are trying to help monarchs and other pollinators, it's best to avoid them. Many herbicides, and all insecticides, have the potential to poison or kill pollinators, including monarchs. Avoid using plants treated with systemic insecticides, which are absorbed as the plant grows, distributing the chemicals throughout the plant tissue and into the pollen and nectar. These insecticides include imidacloprid, dinotefuran, clothianidin, and thiamethoxam. When purchasing plants from nurseries or garden centers, always ask whether the plants have been treated with insecticides.



## Recommended Plants for Michigan Pollinators

Species Name	Common Name	Monarch Value	Pollinator Value	Bloom Color	Height (feet)	Sun Requirements	Water Requirements	Flowering Season		
								Ea	Md	Lt
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp Milkweed	VH	VH		3-4	H, M	H, M		●	●
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Common Milkweed	VH	VH		2-3	H, M	M, L		●	●
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Weed	VH	VH		1-3	H	M, L		●	●
<i>Aster laevis</i>	Smooth Aster	H	H		2-4	H	M, L			●
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	New England Aster	VH	H		3-6	H	M, L			●
<i>Baptisia alba (macrophylla)</i>	White Wild Indigo	L	H		2-4	M	H, M	●	●	
<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	Lance-Leafed Coreopsis	H	M		1-2	H, M	M, L	●		
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower	H	H		1-2	H, M	M, L		●	
<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	Oxeye Sunflower	M	H		3-4	H	M		●	●
<i>Liatris spicata</i>	Dense Blazing Star	VH	H		3-4	H	M, L		●	●
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild Bergamot	VH	VH		2-4	H	H, M		●	
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Foxglove Beardtongue	L	VH		1-2	H	M, L	●	●	
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Yellow Coneflower	H	H		3-5	H, M	H, M		●	
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan	H	M		1-3	H, M	L		●	●
<i>Solidago rigida</i>	Stiff Goldenrod	VH	H		2-5	H	M, L			●
<i>Tradescantia ohioensis</i>	Spiderwort	L	VH		1-2	H, M	M	●		
<i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>	Culver's Root	H	H		3-5	H, M	M, L		●	



## Pollinator Friendly Native Grasses

Species Name	Common Name	Height (feet)	Sun Requirements	Water Requirements
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big bluestem	3-6	H, M	L
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	3-5	H, M	M, L
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little bluestem	2-3	H, M	M, L
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Prairie Dropseed	2-3	H	M, L
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass	3-5	H, M	M, L

### KEY

VH = Very High  
H = High  
M = Medium  
L = Low

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Ea = Early  
Md = Middle  
Lt = Late

