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For Immediate Release

Monarch Memories Last a Lifetime, Part 2

Neenah, Wisconsin – Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes, a national not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization based in Wisconsin wants everyone to be successful in planting a native plant butterfly habitat garden. Planting a native butterfly garden or habitat shows you care deeply about the environment and your connection to nature. While providing food and shelter for monarchs and other pollinators, you also help to conserve native plants, reduce habitat fragmentation and increase biodiversity in the landscapes. Healthy ecosystems directly affect the quality of our food, water and air—and what could be more important than that?



Photo by Janet Allen

The first part of this series outlined the steps for establishing a habitat garden. This second part will list which native host and nectar plants provide much needed food for monarchs and their larvae. At the same time these plants will repay the gardener with beauty and interest throughout the year. These are the plants of the open spaces that Europeans encountered for the first time on their journeys throughout North America. Many of these plants have become unknown to us again. Some of their names hint at their history: Ironweed, New Jersey Tea, Sneezeweed... As beautiful in the garden as they were in the prairies, and surely all worthy of further study! Let these plants take you back in time and let them feed the monarchs – and you will create your own moments to remember.

There are plants for any situation, from gravel to marshland. The ones listed here should grow in average garden soil. Need information about a specific plant, planting situation or where to buy locally native plants? For more advice (or encouragement!) with any native plant project, be sure to check out the excellent information on landscaping with Native Plants at the Wild Ones national website: wildones.org

Why Native Plants Matter

Butterflies and moths depend generally on native plants as their larval host plants. In the case of monarchs, milkweed species are critical for their survival. Whenever possible, grow local genotype and local ecotype native plants that have co-evolved in their native habitats with other plants, and wildlife such as insect pollinators. Local native plants are vigorous and hardy. Adapted to their region, local ecotypes can survive winter cold and summer heat. The deep roots of native plants, especially those of prairie plants, trees and shrubs, hold soil, control erosion and withstand droughts. Native plants, once established, will require less watering and may support natural pest control. To prevent the local extinction of native flora, plants should be bought from reputable nurseries and not dug from natural areas. For local genotype/ecotype guidelines: wildones.org/land/ecotype.html

Host Plants for Monarchs:

Monarch larvae feed exclusively on milkweeds. Plant at least ten individual milkweed plants in your butterfly garden, if possible. Choose at least two different species. Wild Ones recommends you include common milkweed since it is the Monarch's preferred species of milkweed. It may grow into large clumps, but if there is room in your garden, please include it.

Douglas W. Tallamy, Ph.D, tells us in his book *"Bringing Nature Home"*, "Without Milkweeds there can be no monarchs."

These are the native milkweed species that are recommended by Monarch Watch, North America Butterfly Association and Wild Ones for the northeast monarch migration region (Midwest and Northeast USA):

- Common Milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*)
- Swamp Milkweed** (*Asclepias incarnata*)
- Butterfly Milkweed** (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- Purple Milkweed** (*Asclepias purpurascens*)
- Prairie Milkweed** (*Asclepias sullivanti*)
- Whorled Milkweed** (*Asclepias verticillata*)
- Poke Milkweed** (*Asclepias exaltata*)
- Sullivant's Milkweed** (*Asclepias sullivantii*)

Nectar Plants:

Nectar plants provide food for adult monarchs and other pollinators throughout the season. Pick from early, mid and late flowering species and have at least three different kinds of plants in bloom at any time. Include the mid-season flowering milkweeds. Not only will you offer a dependable food source to the Monarchs, but your butterfly garden will have visual interest all year long.

Try growing some of these native plants in your butterfly garden or habitat. (Species listed alphabetically according to scientific names.)

Early Nectar Plants:

Shrubs:

- Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*, *A. laevis*, *A. interior*)
- Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- Pussy willow (*Salix discolor*)
- Wild blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*, *V. angustifolium*)

Forbs:

- Wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
- Spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)
- Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)
- Wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)
- Foxglove beard-tongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
- Wild phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)
- Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*)
- Common blue violet (*Viola sororia*, *Viola spp.*)

Mid-Season Nectar Plants:

Shrubs and Vines:

- Leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*)
- New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)



Photo by Betty Hall

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)
Sundrops (*Oenothera fruticosa*)
Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)
Sumac (*Rhus typhina*, *Rhus glabra*, *Rhus* spp.)
White meadowsweet (*Spirea alba*)

Forbs:

Nodding wild onion (*Allium cernuum*)
Dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*, *A. androsaemifolium*)*
Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)
Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Wild blue indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
Partridge pea (*Cassia fasciculata*)
Tall thistle (*Cirsium altissimum*)
Swamp thistle (*Cirsium muticum*)
Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*, *C. tripteris*, *Coreopsis* spp.)
Pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)
Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*)
Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)
Joe pye weed (*Eutrochium maculatum*, *E. purpureum*)
False sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)
Round-headed bush-clover (*Lespedeza capitata*)
Blazing star (*Liatris spicata*, *Liatris ligulistylis*, *Liatris* spp.)
Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
Dotted horsemint (*Monarda punctata*)
Common cinquefoil (*Potentilla simplex*)
Mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*)
Yellow prairie coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*)
Orange coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida*)
Blackeyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
Wild senna (*Senna hebecarpa*)
Purple stemmed aster (*Symphotrichum puniceum*)
Hoary vervain (*Verbena stricta*)
Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*)
Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)

*Not a milkweed species.

Late Flowering Nectar Plants:

Shrubs:

Witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Forbs:

False aster (*Boltonia asteroides*)
Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*)
Calico aster (*Symphotrichum laterifolius*)
Stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*)
Showy goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*)
Heath aster (*Symphotrichum ericoides*)
Smooth aster (*Symphotrichum laevis*)
New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*)
Ironweed (*Vernonia gigantea*, *V. missurica*)



Photo by Joe Powelka

For more information and plant lists specific to your region, please contact your nearest Wild Ones chapter at the address above or visit the Wild Ones national website: wildones.org