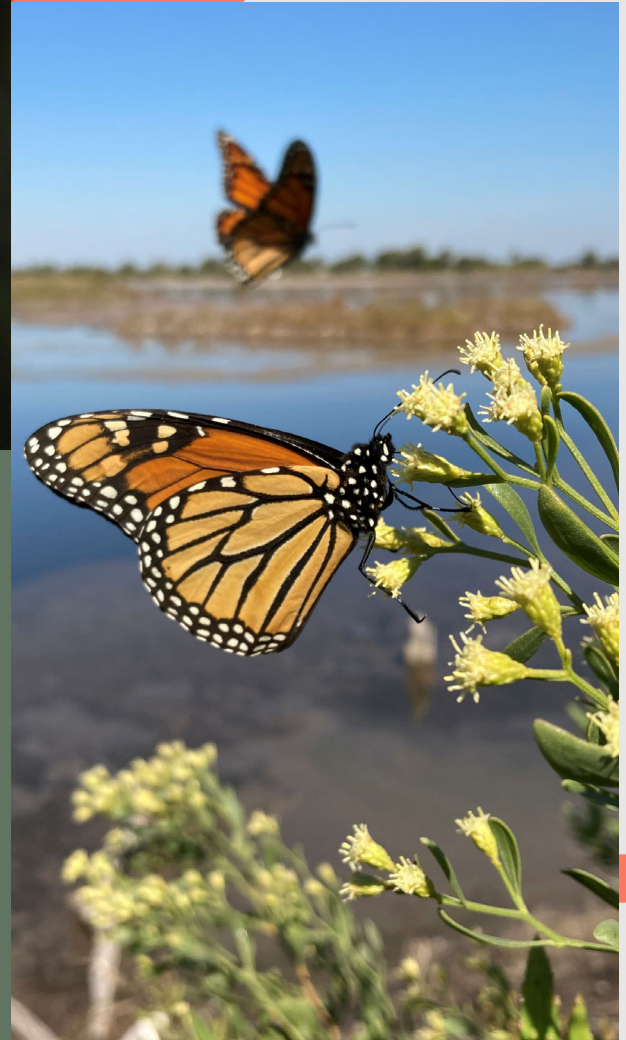


DO'S AND DON'TS FOR HELPING MONARCHS

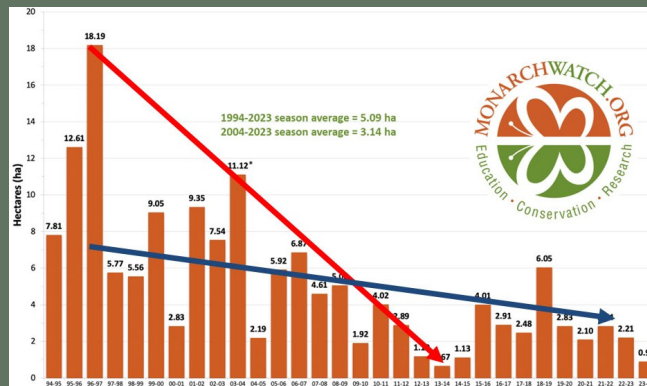
ARE MONARCHS ENDANGERED?



- Recreate native habitat that helps monarchs and other pollinators
- Plant native milkweeds, and avoid tropical milkweed
- Do not purchase monarchs (or other butterflies) from commercial suppliers
- Do not rear monarchs (or other butterflies) indoors in crowded conditions
- If you want to protect monarch caterpillars from predators, consider placing a net over your native milkweeds outdoors.

In 2024, The US Fish & Wildlife Service proposed that monarchs in the USA be listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act. A final decision is pending as of February 2025. This recommendation is based on the size of the overwintering colonies of monarchs in Mexico. These numbers are measured in hectares, not actual numbers of monarchs.

While the number of occupied hectares has declined over time, they have not declined as much as is often said. When people say monarchs have declined by more than 80%, they refer to the highest and lowest recorded hectares (red arrow). When looking at all data, the decline is much less severe (blue arrow).



Not all monarch scientists agree that monarchs are threatened. Some have pointed out that the numbers of breeding monarchs have not declined over time.

HOW TO HELP MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

DISCOVER THE BEST WAYS TO PROTECT MONARCH BUTTERFLIES



AVOID ORDERING MONARCHS OR REARING THEM INDOORS

Caterpillars reared in indoors lack natural cues such as sunlight and changes in temperatures. These cues are important for monarchs to develop into healthy adult butterflies. Scientific studies suggest that monarchs reared inside do not develop into successful migrants.

Indoor rearing can also result in outbreaks of infectious diseases. Monarchs are susceptible to viruses, bacteria and the protozoan parasite *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (OE). Releasing infected butterflies into the wild can spread disease to wild monarchs.

NATIVE GARDENS

When creating your garden, make sure to include plants that are native to your region. Local garden clubs, native plant nurseries, native plant societies, and university extension websites are great sources to get you going.

"Based on current scientific evidence, I recommend people do not plant non-native milkweed and that they avoid ordering monarchs commercially. Instead, I encourage people to create native gardens."

- JAAP DE ROODE

*Professor of Biology, Emory University
See deroodelab.org for de Roode's research on monarch butterflies*

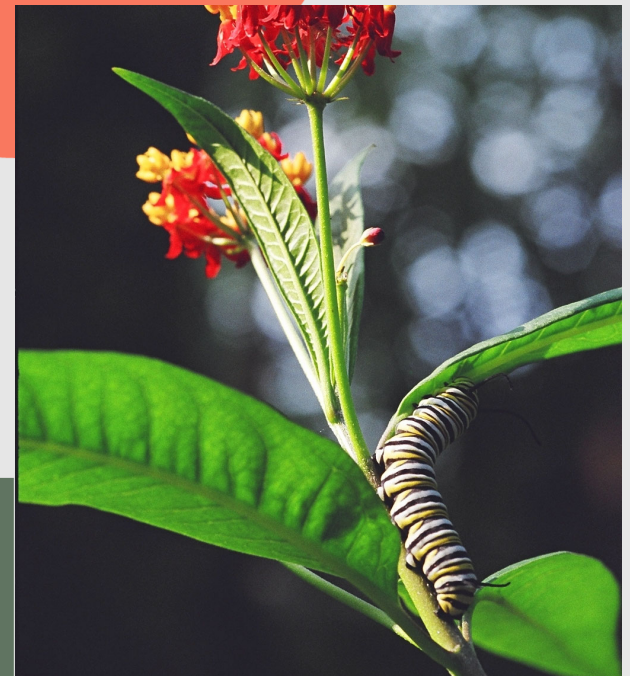
WHAT'S OUR MISSION STATEMENT?

THE ROSALYNN CARTER BUTTERFLY TRAIL ENCOURAGES THE RECREATION OF NATIVE HABITAT WITH A FOCUS ON ALL POLLINATORS, NOT JUST MONARCHS.

Create your garden and join us on the trail!
We are happy to provide you with any guidance you need.



*Rosalynn Carter
Butterfly Trail®*



AVOID TROPICAL MILKWEED

Tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) is often the only milkweed available at commercial garden centers. This milkweed is not native to the US, and causes problems for monarch butterflies.

Tropical milkweed is cold-hardy and can grow year-round in many locations. This entices monarchs to breed instead of migrate in the Fall.

Because of the ongoing breeding, monarchs continue to spread the protozoan parasite *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (OE), leading to very high parasite prevalence (up to 100% of monarchs become infected).

This parasite can kill monarchs and makes it hard for them to fly. As a result, many fewer monarchs will be able to migrate successfully.