



How to Set Up a Monarch Waystation

by Lynne Brosch

As you may be aware, monarch butterflies have been decreasing in population in recent years. Here in the Lake Tahoe area we have a big responsibility in helping them as they migrate north into Oregon, Washington and even to Canada and then migrate back to the coastal areas of California where they spend the winter. Each life cycle of the monarch lasts 6-10 weeks. There are four generations in one year. The 4th generation are the butterflies that migrate to the coast in the fall and return to lay their eggs in the spring. Milkweed is the plant that is needed for these butterflies to lay their eggs on. Only milkweed can be eaten by the hatched caterpillars and they need plenty of it. After the butterflies emerge they will need nectar from a variety of plants.

To create a monarch habitat you will need the following:

- Garden space of at least 100 square feet with at least 6 hours of sun each day.
- Provide light soil with good drainage.
- Milkweed plants and nectar plants should be relatively close together.
- Plant at least 2 varieties of milkweed. In our area that would be narrow leaf (*Asclepias fascicularis*) and showy (*Asclepias speciosa*).
- Plant additional nectar plants such as *oregon grape* (spring nectar) *sulfur buckwheat*, *coyote mint*, *penstemon*, *coneflower*, *currant* and even a *butterfly bush* or two. Try to have something that will be in flower during the entire season. Your entire waystation should have a minimum of 10 plants.
- Use good management practices such as proper watering, mulching, thinning, soil amendment, no insecticide use and removing other invasive plant species.



Showy Milkweed



Narrowleaf Milkweed

Sources for milkweed that should be used in our area would be the Nevada Division of Forestry Washoe Nursery in Carson City or Comstock Seed in Gardnerville, NV. Please keep in mind that seeds you may have purchased online or at a store out of the area, as well as milkweed plants, will not be successful here in Tahoe. They must be locally adapted seeds and plants.

Once you have set up your waystation go to www.MonarchWatch.org/waystations to find out more and how to register your waystation and order your certificate and sign. Watch for more specifics on plants for pollinators and caring for Monarchs in future newsletters.

Resources:

Monarch Watch: <https://monarchwatch.org>

Monarch Joint Venture: <https://monarchjointventure.org>

Xerces Society: <https://xerces.org/monarchs/>

Nevada Monarch Society: nvmonarchs.org

Washoe State Tree Nursery: <http://forestry.nv.gov/ndf-state-forest-nurseries/washoe-state-tree-nursery/>

Comstock Seed: <http://comstockseed.com>

