

Xerces' Community-Powered Monarch Initiatives

MISSION: Protect the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats.

WMC

- Western US
- Overwintering monarchs & habitat



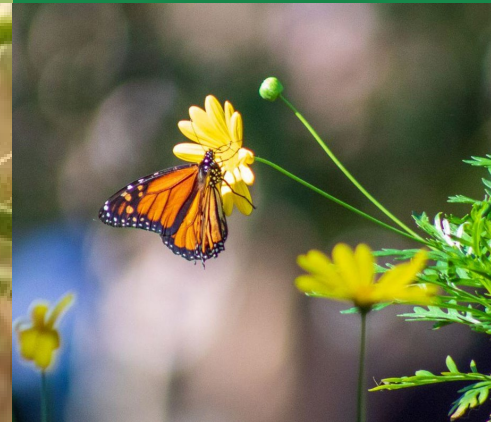
WMMM

- Western US
- Monarchs & milkweed



Nectar Data

- US focus
- Nectar plant observations



Habitat Kits

- US focus
- Regionally specific kits



Western Monarch Count

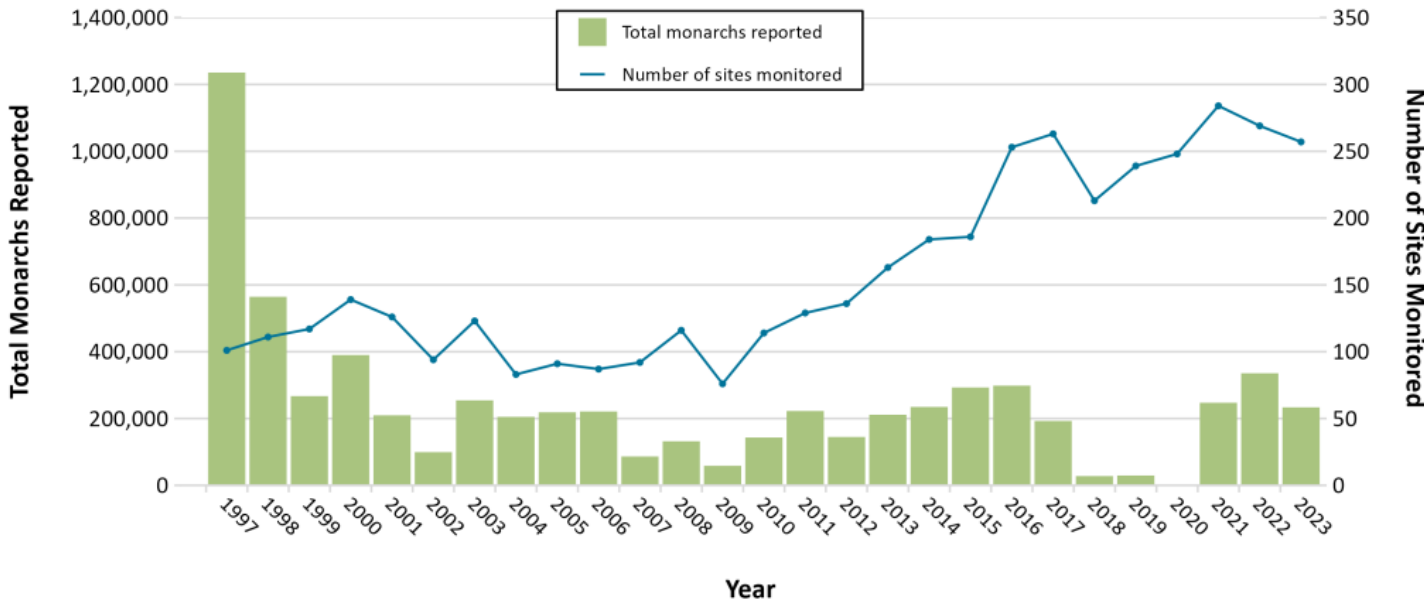
Visit WesternMonarchCount.org

- Overwintering season (September - March)
- Monarch counts + habitat assessments



Western Monarch Count

Total monarchs reported and number of sites monitored from 1997-2023.
Data Available at: WesternMonarchCount.org





Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper

Visit MonarchMilkweedMapper.org



WESTERN MONARCH
MILKWEED MAPPER

Join the “Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper” project on iNaturalist



Photos by: Bob Danziger (left), Isis Howard / Xerces Society (right)

Monarch Nectar Database

- Over 2,200 records!
- Currently includes...
 - Expert observations
 - iNaturalist data
- Now we're making an effort to collect more data from partners & community scientists.
- Major data gaps (United States):
 - Northern Plains
 - Desert Southwest
 - Southeast



Monarch Nectar Plant Observations

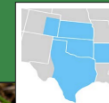
Please share your monarch butterfly nectar plant observations with the Xerces Society!

You can read more about this project here: <https://xerces.org/monarch-nectar-plants/>.



MONARCH NECTAR PLANTS

Southern Plains



	Bloom	Common Name	Scientific Name
Spring to Summer	1	Forbs	
	1	Betonyleaf thoroughwort	<i>Conoclinium betonicifolium</i>
Spring to Fall	2	Blacksamson echinacea	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>
	3	Butterfly milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>
Summer	4	Dakota mock vervain	<i>Glandularia bipinnatifida</i>
	5	Spider milkweed	<i>Asclepias viridis</i>
Summer to Fall	6	Whorled milkweed	<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>
	7	Bearded beggarticks	<i>Bidens aristosa</i>
	8	Pale purple coneflower	<i>Echinacea pallida</i>
	9	Baldwin's ironweed	<i>Veronica baldwinii</i>
	10	Blue mistflower	<i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>
	11	Button eryngo	<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>
	12	Compassplant	<i>Silphium laciniatum</i>
	13	Cusp blazing star	<i>Liatris punctata</i> var. <i>mucronata</i>
	14	Downy ragged goldenrod	<i>Solidago petiolaris</i>
	15	Golden crownbeard	<i>Verbena encelioides</i>
	16	Gray goldenrod	<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>
	17	Lateflowering thoroughwort	<i>Eupatorium serotinum</i>
	18	Maximilian Sunflower	<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>

The Southern Plains encompass the grasslands states of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas, as well as most of Texas and eastern Colorado. Shifting elevations and rainfall patterns from the dry foothills of the Rockies to the wet, flat expanses of eastern Texas produce an incredibly rich diversity of flowering plants, which in turn support an array of pollinators. In the spring, monarch butterflies take advantage of the vast open prairies and these floral resources to breed; in the fall, the same prairies provide fuel for migrating monarchs heading back south for the winter.

Each spring, monarchs leave overwintering sites in coastal California and the mountains of central Mexico and fan out across North America to breed and lay eggs on milkweed, the monarch's host plant. Several generations are produced over the course of the spring and summer. In late summer and early fall, adults from the northern U.S. and southern Canada migrate back to the overwintering sites, where they generally remain in reproductive diapause until the spring, when the cycle begins again.

Monarchs at overwintering sites in Mexico and California have declined dramatically since monitoring began in the late 1990s. Across their range in North America, monarchs are threatened by a variety of factors. Loss of milkweed from extensive herbicide use has been a major contributing factor, and habitat loss and degradation from other causes, natural disease and predation, climate change, and widespread insecticide use are probably also contributing to monarch declines. Because of the monarch's migratory life cycle, it is important to protect and restore habitat across their entire range. Adult monarchs depend on diverse nectar sources for food during all stages of the year, from spring and summer breeding to fall migration and overwintering. Caterpillars are completely dependent on their milkweed host plants. Inadequate milkweed or nectar plant food sources at any point may impact the number of monarchs that successfully arrive at overwintering sites in the fall.

Providing milkweeds and other nectar-rich flowers that bloom where and when monarchs need them is one of the most significant actions you can take to support monarch butterfly populations. This guide features Southern Plains native plants that have documented monarch visitation, bloom during the times of year when monarchs are present, are commercially available, and are known to be hardy. These species are well-suited for wildflower gardens, urban green spaces, and farm field borders. Beyond supporting monarchs, many of these plants attract other nectar- and/or pollen-seeking butterflies, bees, moths, and hummingbirds, and some are host plants for other butterfly and moth caterpillars. For a list of native plants that host butterflies and moths specific to your zip code see www.mel.org/nativeplantfinder.

The species in this guide are adaptable to growing conditions found across the Southern Plains. Please consult regional floras, the Biota of North America's North American Plant Atlas (<http://bonap.net/napa>), or the USDA's PLANTS database (<http://plants.usda.gov>) for details on species distributions in your area.



Monarch & Pollinator Habitat Kits



- Native plant kits offered in 7 US regions (so far)
- FREE pollinator-friendly plant materials
- Locally sourced
- For shovel-ready projects