

# Monarch

*Danaus plexippus*

-The Monarch is a miracle migratory. New generations hatched along the way perform the feat on different legs of the journey. Monarchs are the only North American butterflies that follow a yearly migration. The most astounding thing about Monarch migration is that no single butterfly ever makes the entire trip! It's an ancestral roadmap that steers these creatures on their way from south to north and back again.

-The Journey South: In late summer, Monarchs in North America begin to congregate. By August, they are on the move southward, winging along some of the same migration routes used by birds. Western Monarchs are heading to Southern California, while Eastern and Midwestern Monarchs are heading to Mexico.

-The Journey North: When spring comes, the adult Monarchs begin the journey north. They have nearly reached the ends of their lives, so most never make it back to the starting point of the summer before. The adults breed along the way, lay their eggs, and most die. Their eggs hatch, caterpillars grow and pupate, and the freshly emerged generation takes up the final leg of the trip, heading north unerringly for unseen ancestral summering grounds.



Wingspan: 3 ½ to 4 inches

Caterpillar hosts: The only plants that Monarchs can lay their eggs on are the Milkweeds, including Common Milkweed, Swamp Milkweed, and Showy Milkweed.

**Plant some Milkweed for this well-known butterfly**

Adult food: The adult Monarch feeds on the aforementioned Milkweeds, and also Cup-Plant, Wild Lupine, Dogbane, Lilac, Red Clover, Thistles, Goldenrods, Blazing Stars, and Ironweed.

Nature is so cool! The Monarch needs Milkweeds for its young. The Viceroy needs to mimic the Monarch for its disguise. Without the Monarch, birds would soon learn that the Viceroy does not taste bad, and therefore take away its #1 defense; mimicry.

Therefore, if you plant some Milkweeds, you are actually helping two butterflies; one directly, and another indirectly