



NATIVE MILKWEED 101



Supported by the San Diego Native Milkweed Project

Why is milkweed important?

Milkweed is the host plant of the monarch butterfly. This means it is the only plant they lay their eggs on, and is the food source for their growing larva once they hatch!



How can I help monarchs?

In addition to planting native milkweed, you can add other flowering pollinator plants that provide them with nectar. Be sure to leave out some water for them, and don't use pesticides on your plants.



Why is native milkweed important?

Native plants grow naturally in a region. They play an important role in balancing the ecosystem and support native insects and wildlife in the area. They follow the natural rhythm of the seasons, and this is very important for milkweed!

Western monarchs migrate West towards the California coast for the winter, and they use signals from nature to tell them when it's time to start flying. Native milkweed dies back in the winter, so monarchs know it's time to go!

Tropical milkweed grows all year round and confuses the monarch. When it's available all the time, they never get the signal to migrate.

There is also a parasite that grows on the leaves of all milkweed called OE. When native milkweed dies back in the winter, it cleanses itself of the OE parasites. Tropical milkweed that grows all year continues to gather OE parasites. When monarchs eggs and larva are infected with many OE parasites, it can cause them to have deformed wings, stunt their growth, and make them too weak to fly.

If you would like some FREE San Diego native milkweed seeds for your garden, please email us at: pollinators@rcdsandiego.org

Learn more about the San Diego Native Milkweed Project <http://www.tinyurl.com/sdmilkweed>