



# Milkweeds for Monarchs

## The St. Louis Butterfly Project

### About the Initiative

The City of St. Louis is launching a citywide initiative to help connect people and urban nature. The **STL Milkweeds for Monarchs** initiative goals are to 1) increase monarch butterfly habitat and 2) help people experience the splendor of monarchs in neighborhood parks and spaces. This initiative will advance a priority in the Mayor's Sustainability Action Agenda: *to foster an enhanced connection between people and urban natural resources*. Access to nature can reduce stress and anxiety, nourish the imagination, and provide important learning opportunities. **STL Milkweeds for Monarchs** also aligns with the City's Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative. Creating monarch gardens is also an opportunity to enhance a community's sense of place and to build relationships between neighbors.

Mayor Slay has committed that the City will plant 50 monarch gardens, and is challenging the community to plant an additional 200 monarch gardens in 2014 to commemorate our 250th birthday year.

In partnership with community plant and butterfly experts, the City has created a **STL Monarch Mix** to serve as a reference in establishing your monarch garden. These plants have been carefully selected to provide the best combination of features for the butterflies and your personal enjoyment. These plants were chosen to flower at different times of the growing season, offering seasonal color and important butterfly food and nectar sources.

For updated information on the **STL Milkweeds for Monarchs** initiative and to receive recognition for creating a monarch garden, please visit [stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/](http://stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/).



Photo credit: North Creek Nursery

### Why Monarchs and Milkweed?

The monarch butterfly population has declined 90 percent over the last two decades. Famous for their remarkable annual migrations between Mexico and Canada, monarchs are important for their pollinator role in our ecosystem. Monarchs are iconic and easily recognizable; this makes them a unique symbol and educational tool for demonstrating the importance and joy of experiencing biodiversity in our everyday lives. Female monarchs depend on milkweed to lay their eggs and feed their caterpillar larvae. While other flower species can serve as nectar sources for butterflies, we need milkweeds to play host to monarch caterpillars so the monarch population can grow.



This is an initiative of the City of St. Louis Office of Sustainability.  
For more information on this or other sustainability initiatives in the City of St. Louis,  
Contact Catherine Werner, Sustainability Director, Office of the Mayor  
WernerC@stlouis-mo.gov or visit [stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability](http://stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability)



# Planting Your Monarch Garden

## Supplies

To create a garden, you will need the following:

- Approximately 1 square meter area that is best suited for attracting, hosting and feeding monarchs, with good access to sunlight. One square meter is roughly 3 ft x 3 ft. If you prefer a rectangular layout, it will be roughly 2 ft x 5 ft.
- 1 pot or container of each plant species suggested in the **STL Monarch Mix**
- Garden trowel or shovel
- Mulch (optional, but recommended)

## Instructions

1. Divide the area to be planted into nine squares, placing each plant about 12" from its neighbor. A rectangular layout is suggested to the right.
2. In the middle of each square, dig a hole roughly 6 inches deep and wide enough to fit the plant plug. A good rule of thumb is to dig a hole slightly larger than the container the plant plug came in.
3. Gently break up the roots of each plant plug and place plants in the holes. Fill in lightly with soil.
4. Cover the entire monarch garden with a light layer of mulch.
5. Water your garden immediately, and then water daily.
6. After a couple weeks, water every couple of days. Because these plants are native, once they are established they should only need occasional watering.
7. Share a photo of your monarch garden at [stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/](http://stlouis-mo.gov/sustainability/) so we can track and map the initiative's progress.

## Reminders

- Do not use pesticides or chemical fertilizers on or near your monarch garden.
- These flowers are likely to bloom at different times, and they may take a year or two to get established.

## STL Monarch Mix of Plants

Whorled Milkweed



*Asclepias verticillata*  
Blooms June-July, White

Purple Coneflower



*Echinacea purpurea*  
Blooms June-Aug, Pale Purple

Goldenrod



*Solidago drummondii*  
Blooms Aug-Sept, Yellow

Black-Eyed Susan



*Rudbeckia fulgida*  
Blooms June-Oct, Orange-Yellow

Butterfly Weed



*Asclepias tuberosa*  
Blooms June-July, Orange

Plant these taller species in the rear



Common Milkweed\*



*Asclepias syriaca*  
Blooms June-Aug, Light Pink

Swamp/Marsh Milkweed



*Asclepias incarnata*  
Blooms July-Aug, Pink

Bee Balm/Bergamot



Native *Monarda* Species  
Blooms July-Sept, Lavender

New England Aster\*



*Symphiotrichum novae-angliae*  
Blooms Aug-Sept, Pink-Purple

\* Some plants can grow to be very large, so they should either be placed in the back of the garden or in a location where they can be managed.

Photos courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden and Monarch Watch