

Without a major cooperative effort to create, conserve, and protect monarch habitats, the monarch butterfly population will continue to decline.

## Certify Your Monarch Habitat

To show your support of monarch conservation, you can have your monarch habitat certified as an official Monarch Waystation by Monarch Watch. Your habitat will be included in the International Monarch Waystation Registry and you will be awarded a certificate bearing your habitat's Monarch Waystation ID number. You may also choose to display a weatherproof sign that identifies your monarch habitat as an official Monarch Waystation. This display helps convey this important monarch conservation message to all those who visit your habitat and may encourage them to create their own Monarch Waystation.



Overwintering monarchs fill the sky in Mexico. Photo by Ann Ryan.

Complete, up-to-date information about Monarch Watch's Monarch Waystation program is available online at:

[www.MonarchWatch.org/waystations](http://www.MonarchWatch.org/waystations)

Visit us online for more monarch information, research projects, community forums, newsletters, promotional & educational items via the Monarch Watch Shop, and more:

[www.MonarchWatch.org](http://www.MonarchWatch.org)

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# Monarch Waystations

*Create, Conserve, & Protect  
Monarch Habitats*



Monarch on tropical milkweed. Photo by Donna Watkins.

## Monarch Conservation

Each fall, hundreds of millions of monarch butterflies migrate from the United States and Canada to mountains in central Mexico where they wait out the winter until conditions favor a return flight in the spring. The monarch migration is truly one of the world's greatest natural wonders yet it is threatened by habitat loss at overwintering grounds in Mexico and throughout breeding areas in the United States and Canada.



## Monarch Waystation Habitats

Monarch Waystations are places that provide resources necessary for monarch butterflies to produce successive generations and sustain their migration. Without milkweeds throughout their spring and summer breeding areas in North America, monarchs would not be able to produce the successive generations that culminate in the migration each fall. Similarly, without nectar from flowers, these fall migratory monarch butterflies would be unable to make their long journey to overwintering grounds in Mexico. The need for host plants for larvae and energy sources for adults applies to all monarch butterfly populations around the world.

## Why We Are Concerned

Milkweeds and nectar sources are declining due to development and the widespread use of herbicides in croplands, pastures, and roadsides.

Development (subdivisions, factories, shopping centers, etc.) in the U.S. consumes habitat for monarchs and other wildlife at a rate of 6,000 acres (9.4 square miles) a day, 2.2 million acres per year. This is roughly equivalent to losing an area of habitat the size of the state of Illinois (the 24th largest U.S. state) every sixteen years!

Widespread adoption of herbicide-resistant corn and soybeans has resulted in the loss of more than 80 million acres of monarch habitat in recent years. The planting of these crops genetically modified to resist the non-selective systemic herbicide glyphosate

(Roundup®) allows growers to spray fields with this herbicide instead of tilling to control weeds. Milkweeds survive tilling but not the repeated use of glyphosate. This habitat loss is significant since these croplands represent more than 30% of the summer breeding area for monarchs.

The use of herbicides and frequent mowing along roadsides has converted much of this habitat to grasslands – a habitat generally lacking in food and shelter for wildlife. Although some states have started to increase the diversity of plantings (including milkweeds) along roadsides, these programs are small.

Unfortunately, the remaining milkweed habitats in pastures, hayfields, edges of forests, grasslands, native prairies, and urban areas are not sufficient to sustain the large monarch butterfly populations seen in the 1990s.

**Monarchs need our help.**

## What You Can Do

To offset the loss of milkweeds and nectar sources we need to create, conserve, and protect monarch butterfly habitats. You can help by creating “Monarch Waystations” (monarch habitats) in home gardens, at schools, businesses, parks, zoos, nature centers, along roadsides, and on other unused plots of land. Creating a Monarch Waystation can be as simple as adding milkweeds and nectar sources to existing gardens or maintaining natural habitats with milkweeds. No effort is too small to have a positive impact.

## Value of Monarch Waystations

By creating and maintaining a Monarch Waystation you are contributing to monarch butterfly conservation. Your efforts will help ensure the preservation of the species and the continuation of the spectacular monarch migration phenomenon.



Breaking ground for Monarch Waystation #1015. Photo by Stephanie Baker.