



## BUTTERFLY AWARENESS

The Monarch butterfly season is rapidly approaching as they make their long journey from Mexico back to Nova Scotia! Gardeners, butterfly lovers and those with a keen interest in

volunteering are asked to join in the Mersey Tobetic Research Institute's (MTRI) efforts to increase awareness of the Monarch's diminishing populations.

Local factors that can affect the Monarch species are pesticide and herbicide use on nectaring plants, uncontrollable weather events that occur during their migration and breeding periods, and the limited Monarch habitat here in Nova Scotia. MTRI has taken the initiative to inform and involve the public of conservation efforts to help the species to thrive again, by spreading information about the Monarchs and helping to increase their habitat locally. That is why MTRI has introduced their "Let's Plant 1000 Milkweed Together" campaign.

Milkweed is essential for the Monarch's survival. It acts as both a host plant for its eggs and larva as well as a main food source. Milkweed leaves contain a chemical that when consumed by the Monarch caterpillars will build up over time and make them toxic to predators who may ingest them. In Nova Scotia, there are two types of naturally growing milkweed; common milkweed and swamp milkweed. There is a perceived negativity about common milkweed because it spreads quite easily due to root shoots and has proved a nuisance to control. Due to this people often forget its usefulness to the Monarchs and try to eradicate it from their area. Common milkweed grows in large patches and provides a substantial amount of habitat for Monarchs so it is ideal to have growing in fields, meadows and open spaces where it can be allowed to spread and grow naturally. At MTRI, swamp milkweed is provided as a resource because it is a non-noxious weed but is still relatively easy to grow and a great source of habitat for Monarchs. Swamp milkweed bulks up over time and does not spread. It produces small purple flowers and is beautiful to mix in your flowerbeds with other nectaring species to make a butterfly-friendly garden.

One fantastic way to get swamp milkweed for your gardens is by becoming a Butterfly Club member. For \$10.00 you receive a membership and a kit including information on Monarchs, tips and tricks on how to create chemical-free habitat, how to spot and report Monarch sightings and lastly, two swamp milkweed plants (or a packet of seeds)!

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Butterfly Club contact Leah at 902-682-2371 or [leah.veinot@merseytobeatic.ca](mailto:leah.veinot@merseytobeatic.ca). For more information visit our website at [www.merseytobeatic.ca](http://www.merseytobeatic.ca) or check out the Butterfly Club Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MonarchButterflyClub>.

Let's plant 1000 milkweed together this summer!

Leah Veinot, Information Coordinator

**Help the Monarch Butterflies**

Let's Plant Over 1000 Swamp Milkweed Together

Join the Butterfly Club

For Just \$10 You Receive:

- Membership
- Monarch and Milkweed Info
- How to Plant a Butterfly Garden
- Two Swamp Milkweed Plants & More!

For More Information Contact:  
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