

ENVIRONMENT

Have you seen a monarch butterfly this summer?

Nancy Robinson

Environmentally yours

It is never too late to join the Butterfly Club at the Mersey Toxic Research Institute near Kejimikojik National Park.

"We have approximately 600 Swamp Milkweed planted by dedicated Butterfly Club members, and over 1,000 more plants in our garden here at MTRI," says Carter Feltham, coordinator of the butterfly program. "We are trying now to reach our goal of 200 new Butterfly Club members. We are very close, just 42 more to go," Feltham had said last week.

You pay \$10 to become a member and for that you get two plants, a Butterfly Club information kit and more! And was also a workshop planned on Aug. 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The monarchs, already the second or third generation, arrive here in July. Many people across North America have been planting milkweed, where the monarchs lay their eggs, to help them along their way. The larvae, which are caterpillars, feed off the milkweed leaves.

Once the butterfly emerges from the pupa stage, it needs lots of other flowers around for nectar, so planting a full butterfly garden is a good idea. Here the adult monarch will live for about a month and die after laying a new set of eggs. The last generation, however, in late August, will not lay eggs, but rather will get itself ready for the long journey to the forests of Mexico where it will overwinter.

Larry Bogan, perhaps Nova Scotia's most active monarch butterfly helper, raises monarchs, tagging them in order to monitor the species.

"The second round of laying is

now taking place," he says. "As of Aug. 5, we have released 20 adults from our rearing efforts but have many more chrysalis. . . We are not tagging the current adults since they are not headed south but will tag those that emerge later in the month."

A monarch with one of his tags was found in Mexico last year - great find!

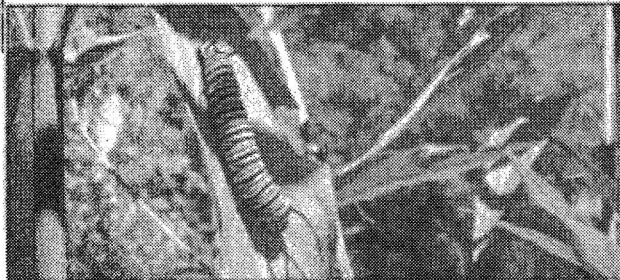
You can plant milkweed now to be ready for the arrival of the monarchs next summer. You might even get a bonus of a late generation laying eggs this month. Then sign up with mis-

sion-monarch.org to take part in the scientific monitoring of this species that is on COSEWIC's "of special concern" list.

You can plant milkweed anytime. MTRI provides wonderful plants - mine have survived several re-plantings and now I have a caterpillar about to go into its chrysalis, the pupa stage, as you can see from the photo.

If you can make it, and got to see this article in time, register for the monarch workshop on Aug. 17 (Phone: 902-682-2371) and pick up your new plants - a wonderful asset to any garden.

Rooted in Community Tri-County Extra



Monarch larva stage, 5th instar caterpillar, 40 mm long, heading down a leaf of the swamp milkweed plant to get lunch. Photo taken Aug. 9 in Bear River, N.S.