MONARCH

DANAUS PLEXIPPUS

A valuable pollinator

Main benefits for agriculture

The monarch is essential to the pollination of many agricultural crops. Though not as prolific a pollinator as the bee, the monarch butterfly has the advantage of being a **native species** that plays a significant role in the **pollination of wildflowers and cultivated plants**.

Preserving meadows and ecological corridors that contain **monarch host plants**, like milkweed, helps maintain monarch populations while promoting biodiversity and providing habitats for other agriculturally beneficial species.

Habitats

- Grasslands, and pastureland
- Abandoned agricultural land and riparian buffers

Did you know?

Populations of monarchs that migrate between Canada, the United States, and Mexico have fallen by more than 80% compared with historical levels. Monarch populations can fluctuate from year to year due to weather conditions, available food resources, conservation efforts, and other factors. However, the overall trend shows a sharp decline.

Legal status: As of 2023, endangered species listed on Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act.
Management Plan for the Monarch (Danaus plexippus) in Canada. wildlife-species.canada.ca/species-risk-registry/virtual_sara/files/plans/mp-monarch-e-final.pdf

What you can do to help the monarch

Preserving habitat	Create **reserves of uncut grasslands** to boost milkweed survival, particularly between June and September.
	Maintain herbaceous riparian buffers, flower strips, and perennial crops containing a **variety of flowers for adult monarch butterflies to feed on.**
	Limit the conversion of herbaceous grassland to annual crops such as corn and soybeans.
Encouraging reproduction	**Develop monocultures of milkweed** (e.g., swamp milkweed, common milkweed) for monarch caterpillars, which feed exclusively on this plant. *Milkweed fibre can be harvested and sold to the textile industry for an additional source of income.*
	Plant native milkweed in riparian buffers (or windbreaks), as well as other **nectar-bearing plants**, such as boneset, spotted Joe-Pye weed, wild bergamot, Canada goldenrod, and asters.
Reducing mortality	Pesticides can harm the plants on which monarchs feed. **Reduce pesticide use** by using integrated pest management methods that promote soil health.
	Maintain a buffer zone between crops and flower strips, and **do not apply herbicides or pesticides to cropland adjacent to pollinator strips** or field edges in windy conditions to reduce the risk of pesticide drift.

References :

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