

Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Maryland Distribution: Poor, coarse soils of dry fields, rock outcrops, and other steep slopes throughout the state.

Height: Up to 3 feet

Blooms: Orange, June to September

Sun: Part sun to full sun

Soil: Well-drained, poor, dry, usually rocky or sandy soil

Garden Use & Maintenance: A stunningly showy wildflower with a long bloom period. Excellent cut flower. Requires no maintenance, but insists upon well-drained, dry, coarse soils or will succumb to diseases. A tendency to completely disappear in winter can leave the gardener unclear about its location. Like other milkweeds, it is susceptible to attack by the invasive alien oleander aphids. Your maintenance options include waiting for beneficial insects or (carefully!) spraying with horticultural oil.

Use for garden beds, xeriscaping, roadsides, dry meadows, rock gardens, pollinator gardens and monarch waystations. Performs particularly well on steep road cuts and at the top of south-facing stone walls.

Garden Companions: Little Bluestem, Whorled Coreopsis

Wildlife/Pollinator Notes: One of the best nectar plants for a wide variety of pollinators. Host plant for the Monarch butterfly. If you plan to use it in that capacity, plant a dozen or more specimens, or add additional milkweed species to your garden. Deer proof.

Reference: <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/butterfly-weed>

How To Grow From Seed: Seeds germinate best after stratification: In nature, the seeds naturally fall from the butterfly weed pods and lie dormant over the winter, germinating in the late spring. You can scatter seeds in your garden in the fall and see what happens (mark the spot as they germinate in late spring). Or, in the early spring, moisten your seeds with sand in a covered dish & refrigerate for 30 days. After 30 days of cold moist storage, the seeds' natural chemical germination inhibitors have dissipated and are ready to be planted.



Butterfly Milkweed at the Middletown Memorial Park Pollinator Garden