

Monarchs Across Georgia Recommended Best Practices

Monarchs Across Georgia (MAG) seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation of the natural life cycle of the monarch. Bringing a wild organism (butterfly) into the classroom or home for closer observation and study can be an essential component of this process. This should only be done in ways that are not harmful to individual butterflies or their population. **The best way to obtain monarch larvae is to plant native milkweeds in your garden or outdoor classroom.** Egg-laying monarchs are generally in Georgia during the months of April - May and again in August - September. The butterflies will find their host plants. It is then appropriate to move a small number* of either eggs or caterpillars indoors to a study area or classroom. After the adult butterflies emerge, they should be released back into the environment from which they were removed.

MAG strongly discourages the purchase or release of any commercially-reared butterflies. Commercial rearing can result in genetically inferior organisms, reduction of genetic diversity, introduction of disease, inbreeding, as well as, the introduction of species and genetics not native to the area. MAG does not promote hand-pairing to rear successive generations of butterflies as this also encourages inbreeding and genetically inferior species. It may also result in the release of butterfly species at times when they are not normally found in Georgia.

Due to a native milkweed shortage at nurseries, tropical milkweed, *Asclepias curassavica*, has been the only milkweed available for sale to gardeners eager to help the monarch butterfly. This is slowly changing due to consumer demand. Please see Monarchs Across Georgia's webpage, Native Milkweed Sources for nurseries in the southeast that sell neonicotinoid-free native milkweed species appropriate for areas in the southeast. MAG recommends phasing out tropical milkweed whenever possible by planting native milkweed species appropriate to your area. We also recommend cutting tropical milkweed back in the fall and winter months to decrease the potential risks** to monarchs. For additional information, we suggest reviewing these resources on our web page <https://www.eealliance.org/mag-resources.html>.

[Field Guide to Georgia Milkweeds](#)

[Monarchs and Georgia's Gardeners](#)

[Not All Milkweed Is Created Equal](#)

[**Potential Risks of Growing Exotic \(Non-Native\) Milkweeds for Monarchs](#)

[*Rearing Monarchs: Why or Why Not?](#)

[Risks of Neonicotinoids to Pollinators](#)

[Why Grow and Sell Native Milkweed](#)