

# **HOW TO GROW MILKWEED PLANTS FOR THE MONARCH BUTTERFLIES FROM SEEDS FOR PENNIES.**

My name is Leo Silvestri and I live at 1158 Erie St. E. Windsor, ON. Canada  
I am a retired house painter without any gardening experience, (other than having planted a few  
veggies in the past.) Now they call me the Milkweed Man. :-)

The information below will show you how to find and collect local native milkweed seeds for FREE  
and how to grow them into plants for about a nickel per plant during spring and early summer, as for  
the fall and early winter you can grow them for 100% FREE thanks to mother nature.

My Wife and I just got involved in saving the monarch butterfly by the summer of 2017, after  
searching online for information on where to find milkweed plants to attract the monarch butterflies in  
our garden we ended up ordering plants online and from local growers by paying from \$ 5.00 to  
\$ 10.00 each. By the end of August of that year I received a phone call from someone who told me  
that if I wanted to harvest some Common Milkweed ( *Asclepia Syriaca*) seeds in ditches near her  
house now would be the time to start. And so I did, after seeing what these plants and seed pods  
looked like I kept watching along side roads in my every day driving, not before long I started to see  
thousands of these plants all over our County.

Later I learned how to harvest these seeds at the right time in the fall, started to collect thousands of  
them and gave them away to anyone who where willing to plant them to provide food for the monarch  
butterflies caterpillars. (The only plant they eat)  
Once we had that many in our hands we looked for ways to turn those seeds into plants for the next  
season, so we gave some away for FREE to local nurseries and encourage them to grow the little  
plants to sell their customers for as little as \$ 2.00 to \$ 3.00 each, (which they did) and now they'll be  
carrying them in the future.

In case you're wondering why am I telling you all this, it's very simple really because if you would  
like to create a monarch butterfly habitat in your property, or if you would like to help a family  
member, friend or a neighbor to do the same I'm going to show you below how to grow hundreds of  
milkweed plants without spending any money other than a couple of dollars for some clean soil.  
(Even if you don't have an existing garden.)

There are hundreds of milkweed species all over North America, to simplify this task we'll be  
concentrating on three of the most popular native species that grows in most USA and Canada  
that the majority of monarchs love the most and easy to find seeds in the fall.

Common Milkweed (*Asclepia Syriaca*) - Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepia Incarnata*)  
Butterfly Weed (*Asclepia Tuberosa*)

First you locate where these plants are in the fields, road sides, ditches, etc... When comes the fall usually by mid September into late October the seed pods will turn into chocolate brown color it will be a good time to harvest them, separate the seeds from the fluff and dry them in the sun for a couple of weeks, ( there will be a link below to show you how to do it) when they are fully dry you can store them into a paper bag ( not plastic ) in your garage or shed for later usage.

Now comes the best part and this is the major reason most people have failed to germinate these seeds in the past and many more will fail in the future. Most milkweed seeds requires what is called cold stratification, all it means that in order to germinate when planted in the spring-summer they need to stay in the fridge for at least 6-8 weeks. ( Unless you plant them during November till January outdoor by doing what is called winter sowing. In this case you can use the ones stored in your garage, mother nature will take care the cold stratification for you during our cold winter.)

The winter sowing is actually the best and easiest way to have hundreds of little milkweed plants by spring time without spending a dime ( unless you need to buy some clean dirt for a couple of dollars for your pots). A link below will show you how to best do this.

In case you live in an area where milkweed seeds are hard to find you may have to purchase some from online vendors or in the seeds stand through our local box stores for a couple of dollars. ( If you live in our City or County you can always pick up the common milkweed seeds for FREE from our house, just send us a SASE ( Self Addressed Stamped Envelope ) if you would like to save time send us a small \$ 5.00 donation by paypal or e-transfer to [leo6@cogeco.ca](mailto:leo6@cogeco.ca)—

These are the milkweed plants mentioned above that the monarch butterflies need for their life cycle.



**Common Milkweed (Asclepias Syriaca)**  
**Excellent nectar food source for the adult monarch as well as for their babies,**  
**it will take 2-3 years to fully develop into a mature plant.**



**Swamp Milkweed (Asclepia Incarnata)**

**This Milkweed Plant is a must for any monarch butterfly garden, it usually blooms in the first year by providing nectar and many leaves for the monarch caterpillars to feed on. If it's native to your area do whatever it takes to get some seeds or small plants.**



**Butterfly Weed (Asclepia Tuberosa)**

As you can see these plants in our property are all in pots – containers and are always visited on a daily base during the breeding season, even though our back yard is all concrete we count dozens of monarchs on a daily base because of the milkweed and a few other rich nectar flower plants that the monarch love. Below I will post a link with more pictures of monarchs in our back yard.

This is how you can do the outdoor winter or spring-summer milkweed seeds sowing, once you have 2-3 seeds per small pot water them good and cover with a net to prevent squirrels from digging. When the plants are about 5-6 inches high you can transplant them anywhere you like. If you use bigger pots you can have more seeds, just remember the less seeds you have the easier it is to removed them later. :-)

If your garden is weed free you can of course scatter the seeds in any area you would like, by using these pots with clean dirt it makes it easier to find and remove the little plants when the time comes.



In case you're not aware there are hundreds of thousands of good folks like you and me all over North America that are involved in helping the monarch butterflies by planting milkweed and rich nectar flowers for all pollinators to survive. Too many habitats are disappearing daily do to land development, pesticides, etc... The only way these creatures will have a chance to survive is for us to do something about it before it's too late.

## **I HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US! :-)**

As I mentioned above these are just a few links that will give you a better idea on how to:

### **NEW FOR 2021 BEST WAY TO GROW MILKWEED FROM SEEDS.**

<http://savethemonarchbutterfly.ca/Fall-Spring-Milkweed-Sowing.pdf>

### **Step by step on how to sow milkweed seeds:**

<http://savethemonarchbutterfly.ca/Planting-Milkweed-Seeds.pdf>

### **How to Cold Stratify Your Perennial Milkweed Seeds**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlgYeduDiM4>

### **Total FREE Winter Milkweed Seed Sowing**

<http://savethemonarchbutterfly.ca/Winter-Sowing-Pict.pdf>

### **Spring and Summer Milkweed Seeds Growing**

<https://youtu.be/EqFd1fxzluI>

### **Easiest way to remove seeds from pods in the fall:**

<https://youtu.be/-qnXdsQL794>

### **Pictures of Monarchs in our back yard during the summer:**

<http://savethemonarchbutterfly.ca/Monarchs-Backyard-2018.pdf>

<https://www.photo-pick.com/online/fe0Z5BzL.link> ( Year 2020 )

### **Our Junior Members Releasing Monarch Butterflies**

<https://www.photo-pick.com/online/GXYu.link>

### **FREE Milkweed Seeds Always Cold Stratified**

<http://savethemonarchbutterfly.ca/Free-Milkweed-Seeds-For-All-2021.pdf>

Visit us at  
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**Thank You for helping  
the Monarch Butterfly. :-)**