

# Common Milkweed – *Asclepias syriaca*



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## Habitat Notes:

Fields, pastures, roadsides, and other open, disturbed habitats.

## Species Identification:

- Pink, purple, or white flowers
- Height 1.5 – 6 feet
- Stem tomentulose to glabrate; milky sap
- Leaves opposite 10-26cm long by 3-10cm wide.
- Leaves glabrate above, soft-hairy to grayish tomentose beneath. Petioles 5-17mm.
- Hoods distinctly longer than the anther heads; horns 0.5-1x as long as the hood.
- Follicles (seed pods) 7-12.5cm, slenderly ovoid, tomentose, muricate.

## Cultural Conditions:

- Full sun (6 or more hours a day)
- Clay, loam, sand, shallow rocky soil
- Good drainage, occasionally dry

## Ecological Benefits:

- Wildlife: Host plant for Monarch butterflies to lay their eggs. Attracts many insects also found on *Asclepias tuberosa*.

## Growing Protocol:

- Seed stratification: C(30)
  - 30 day cold moist stratification. Keep at temperature range of 33-38 degrees for duration of stratification.
  - Add water to stratification media periodically to ensure seeds do not dry out.

## Collection Information:

- Milkweed seed pods. These will begin to split and display seeds when ready. Ideally seeds will be a brown color.
- Avoid collecting after dispersal.
- Collecting whole pods will be more efficient than attempting to empty pods into the bags.

## Pests & Disease:

- Aphids, whiteflies, spider mites, thrips, leaf miners, snails and slugs all affect the over health and productivity of this species.
- Milkweed weevil larvae will feed on seeds in the fall, or in the stem and root of dormant plants.
- Can be susceptible to leaf spot, root rot, and verticillium wilt.