

# Contra Costa County Milkweed Planting Guide

## Why Is Milkweed Important?

Monarch butterflies in the West have declined by 99% over the past 20 years. Milkweed is the butterfly's host plant—the only species they lay their eggs on. Monarch caterpillars eat the leaves, which make them unpalatable to predators. You can help monarchs by planting native milkweed plants in your yard!



Monarch caterpillar on milkweed  
Photo: Marie-Ève Garon-Labrecque

## Milkweed Species in Contra Costa County

### California Milkweed (*Asclepias californica*)

Bloom Time: April to July (early blooming)

Habitat: Rocky outcrops and grassy openings in oak woodlands

How to ID: Thick, woolly stems; magenta-pink flowers; up to 100 cm tall; lays prostrate (flat) when in seed



California milkweed  
Photo: Keir Morse

### Narrow Leaf Milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*)

Bloom Time: May to October (late blooming)

Habitat: Variable; occurs in dry grasslands, drainages, and seeps

How to ID: Long, narrow, pointed leaves; white-pink flowers; 50 to 100 cm tall



Narrow leaf milkweed  
Photo: Barry Rice

### Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)

Bloom Time: June to July (late blooming)

Habitat: Grassy openings in chaparral

How to ID: Velvety or hairy stem; large pale pink flowers; 45 to 200 cm tall



Monarch on showy milkweed  
Photo: Thomas Reyes

For information on how locate milkweed seed, visit The Xerces Society's Milkweed Seed Finder at: <https://www.xerces.org/milkweed/milkweed-seed-finder>.