

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing Asclepias

Asclepias, commonly known as butterfly weed or milkweed, is a plant monarch butterflies need to survive, because it is the only food source that monarch caterpillars will eat. It also is a host plant for other butterflies, such as queen and grey hairstreak butterflies. Milkweed plants are disappearing quickly across the nation due to weed killer and land development. The loss of milkweed plants leads to a decrease in the monarch population. In addition to being known as milkweed, Asclepias also is referred to as pleurisy root, because Native Americans would chew the root to get rid of pulmonary issues.



[Common Asclepias seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

To plant:

Asclepias is very slow to germinate. Speed up the germination process by placing the seeds in a wet paper towel and then into a plastic bag. Place the bag in the refrigerator for 30 days prior to planting. Plant the seeds outdoors in a sunny place, usually in the fall. Plant seeds ½ inch deep and water frequently for two weeks. Do not begin plants indoors, as Asclepias doesn't like its roots to be disrupted, such as during transplanting. Typically, the plant is purchased as a seedling as it is difficult to begin from seed.

To grow:

It takes two months for the Asclepias plant to grow big enough for a caterpillar to eat. Plant plenty of milkweed, as each monarch caterpillar can eat up to 20 leaves. Asclepias can grow in poor conditions, such as rocky or clay-like soil and can tolerate drought. It grows best in full sun but will tolerate partial shade. Asclepias is usually disease resistant,

but it can be a victim to aphids. To get rid of aphids, spray them with water. Asclepias can be a good companion plant to other plants such as Russian sage, catmint, purple coneflower and more.

To harvest:

Do not harvest Asclepias, as it does best when it is planted in the garden and easily accessible to monarch butterflies. Also, although the plant is necessary for monarchs, it is poisonous to humans. Avoid getting the sap on your skin or in your eyes. It also is toxic if eaten by humans or pets. Although its flowers shouldn't be harvested, you can collect seeds from your milkweed plant to plant more. To collect the seeds, wear gloves and collect the seeds in the fall, when the pods are open. The pods should be green or brown and the seeds should be brown.

What Asclepias craves:

Because it thrives in poor conditions,



100%
Non-GMO Seed



One Day
Shipping



100%
Satisfaction Guarantee



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Asclepias doesn't usually require fertilizer. However, a top dressing of compost or organic material around the plant can assist with its growth.

Where to buy Asclepias seeds:

Urban Farmer has many different kinds of Asclepias plants, with plants having orange, white, red or purple blooms. In addition to attracting monarchs and their caterpillars, Urban Farmer's Asclepias seeds grow into plants that also attract bees, hummingbirds and other butterflies.

Check out Asclepias seeds on our website at ufseeds.com!



[Swamp Asclepias seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)



100%
Non-GMO Seed



One Day
Shipping



100%
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