
Milkweed

(*Asclepias syriaca*)



- The pink to purple flowers of milkweed plants bloom from May to August; the leaves are broad with velvety undersides.
- Milkweeds are an important source of nectar for bees, wasps, butterflies, and many other pollinators.
- Pollen in these plants is packaged in 'pollen sacs' called pollinia. The feet or mouthparts of visiting pollinators hook the pollinia and pull them off the flower when the pollinator flies off.
- These are among the most complex flowers in the plant kingdom.

Interesting Facts

- Milkweeds contain a white latex sap that contains alkaloids and other compounds, making it toxic to most herbivores.
- Monarch caterpillars are not only able to eat the plant, but incorporate the toxins for their own chemical defense, making them distasteful to potential predators.
- Milkweeds are the only type of plant on which Monarch butterflies lay their eggs.