



Pollinators -such as butterflies, bees, wasps and hummingbirds- play a vital part in the production of many of our favorite foods and play a vital role in ecosystem health. Pollinator numbers have been declining and, for our own long-term well-being, they need help and support.

## Protecting Pollinators and Protecting Drinking Water

The same practices to maintain pollinator habitat are management practices for protecting water. DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection has been converting lawns near our buildings and reclaiming fields and meadows for the benefit of pollinators which also protects the water quality in the watershed.

Benefits of low or no mow areas and pollinator habitats:

- Reduces need for pesticide, irrigation, and fertilizer.
- Native plants' deep roots allow rainwater to soak into the ground instead of runoff, replenishing ground water.
- Native drought tolerant plants stabilize the soil and reduce erosion.
- Prevents contaminants from flowing into waterways by slowing the flow of stormwater runoff.
- Controls invasive or noxious weeds.

## Monarchs in Trouble

On July 22, 2022, The International Union for Conservation of Nature listed the monarch butterfly as endangered.

In summer, monarchs thrive in fields and depend on milkweed plants. Development, lawns, and landscape chemicals are eliminating milkweed and other flowering plants, once thought of as weeds.

In winter, monarch butterflies migrate to Mexico, where their gathering places are also threatened by development.

As climate change looms, less rain means fewer milkweed plants. Rising temperatures cause the monarchs to migrate earlier, further upsetting this delicate balance.

## Protecting the Monarch

One goal of DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection is to protect endangered species on DWSP properties. Maintained pollinator habitats provide food and shelter for the monarch, and no mow or late mowing schedules allow the monarch to thrive.

## What You Can Do

- Plant host plants to support the whole life cycle of the monarch butterfly. Milkweed is necessary for the caterpillars and flowering plants with nectar feed adult butterflies.
- Don't use chemical applications, fertilizers and/or pesticides on your yard and garden.
- Mow some areas only early and late in the season to allow milkweed and flowering plants to grow to maturity.

Plant some milkweed, and the next time a monarch flutters by, hope they stop for a snack and help your garden grow!



*Monarch butterflies will only lay their eggs on milkweed plants - the only plant the caterpillars will eat.*



*No-mow areas provide shelter and food for all stages of the monarch life cycle.*

*Milkweed gets its name from the milky substance inside the stem and leaves.*



*DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection staff responded to the monarch's plight by moving caterpillars from milkweed plants in a field to be mowed to another location where milkweed plants remained all summer, giving caterpillars the ability to transform into adults.*



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*Watch this video to see how DCR staff helped monarchs in trouble.*