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21. © Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) and milkweeds (*Asclepias* species): The current situation and methods for propagating milkweeds. Luna, Tara and Dumroese, R. Kasten Native Plants Journal 14(1):5-15. 2013.

Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) and milkweeds (*Asclepias* species)

THE CURRENT SITUATION AND METHODS FOR PROPAGATING MILKWEEDS

Tara Luna and R Kasten Dumroese



A male monarch feeding on common milkweed. Photo by Dave Wendelken

ABSTRACT

An international effort is under way to conserve populations of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus* L. [Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae]). Monarchs complete an impressive migration each year, flying from winter roosts on the California coast and the central mountains of Mexico to breeding areas throughout North America. Monarchs depend on habitats along their migratory paths that contain milkweed species (*Asclepias* L. [Apocynaceae])—larvae are obligate feeders on leaves, and adults visit flowers for nectar. More than 130 species of milkweeds grow in North America and are readily propagated using seeds, or in some cases, cuttings. To assist monarchs and

other native pollinators, native plant nurseries and their clients can incorporate milkweed species into restoration plantings in suitable habitats within the native range of individual species.

Luna T, Dumroese RK. 2013. Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) and milkweeds (*Asclepias* species): the current situation and methods for propagating milkweeds. *Native Plants Journal* 14(1):5–15.

KEY WORDS

restoration, seeds, seed propagation, butterfly, Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae, Apocynaceae

NOMENCLATURE

Plants: *Flora of North America* (2013)
Monarch: *ITIS* (2013)