

Sustaining the Monarch Habitat at MRP

What is a Monarch Waystation?

Monarch Waystations provide the essential resources—milkweed and nectar—that monarchs need to breed and fuel their spectacular migrations. Without milkweed throughout North America during the spring and summer, the butterflies cannot produce the successive generations that make the journey south each fall. Similarly, autumn nectar flows provide the critical energy adults need to reach their overwintering grounds in Mexico. This dual need for larval host plants and adult nectar sources applies to butterfly populations worldwide.



The History of the Monarch Waystation at Mills Riverside Park

- Created in June 2007 as an Eagle Scout Project by Brian Kennedy – troop 627
- Certified by [Monarch Watch](#) as a small waystation (less than 200 sq. feet) - 8/22/2007
- Certificate # 1655



Why do we have a Monarch Waystation?

The Monarch waystation at Mills Riverside Park is the gateway to the park's wide-open meadows that are important wildlife habitats. Through its Monarch Waystation, Mills Riverside Park plays a vital role in protecting these iconic butterflies. This local effort helps safeguard the species and ensures that their spectacular migration continues for generations to come, and it connects the park to a world community working together to understand and communicate about the butterfly movement.

This is a certified waystation, meaning that it meets the criteria for providing food, shelter, and breeding grounds for Monarch butterflies.

As with any garden, waystations require regular maintenance practices that are sustainable enough to ensure that the garden attracts Monarchs and other pollinators, and promotes Monarch corridors throughout the community.



Monarch Waystation Sustainable Management Plan:

- Rock wall cleanup: Remove rocks, weed and edge ground 1-1.5 ft. around the entire perimeter, and then replace the rock wall. This will help to prevent grass growing up the sides. This can be done a section at a time.
- Gardening practices:
 - Thin & remove dead stalks & invasive plants
 - Ensure the proper mix of milkweed and nectar plants exists through plant identification (use one of the free apps available)
 - Milkweed plants – 10 in total made up of 2 or more varieties
 - Northeast Region - common milkweed, swamp milkweed, butterfly milkweed, poke milkweed ... needs 10 plants of 2+ types
 - Additional pollinator and nectar plants - goldenrod, echinacea, yarrow, fennel, parsley, lavender, mint, Mexican Hat Flower, zinnias, Shasta daisy and sunflowers.
 - Nectar plants - Several annual, biennial, perennial plants for ever bloom
- Incorporate additional features (e.g., fruit feeders, bee nesting boxes, other host plants)

References

- <https://www.americanmeadows.com/blog/2016/06/17/how-to-create-a-monarch-waystation>
- <https://monarchwatch.org/waystations/>
- https://monarchwatch.org/waystations/monarch_waystation_brochure.pdf
- <https://monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/milkweed/free-milkweeds-schools-nonprofits/>
- <https://journeynorth.org/monarchs>