

Monarch

(Danaus plexippus)

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Florida Museum

3D Butterfly Cards



The **Monarch** (*Danaus plexippus*) is one of the most beloved animals in North America. Beyond being a common garden visitor, it is well known for making an amazing annual migration. During spring and summer, monarchs breed throughout the U.S. and southern Canada. In the fall, adults of the eastern population migrate to Mexico, flying up to 3,000 miles. In the western U.S., monarchs migrate to scattered groves along the coast of California. The following spring, these butterflies leave their overwintering sites and fly northward in search of milkweed plants on which to lay their eggs. As monarchs spread across North America, several generations are produced. In Florida, some non-migratory individuals remain and breed year-round.

Sadly, population monitoring at overwintering sites in Mexico and California has documented a steady decline in recent years. Monarchs are threatened by loss and degradation of habitat, disease, adverse weather and the ongoing decline of native milkweeds (*Asclepias* sp.). Conservation efforts are underway in Florida to map naturally occurring native milkweed populations and expand the commercial availability of native milkweed for habitat restoration and home landscaping.

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Cover photo by: Kathy Malone

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