



Milkweed

Scientific Name: *Asclepias spp.*

Recommended Varieties:

Plant only varieties native to your area. It is not recommended to plant tropical milkweeds.

- Narrow Leaf - *asclepias fascicularis*
- Skeleton - *asclepias subulata*
- Whitestem or Wax - *asclepias albicans*
- Kotolo - *Asclepias eriocarpa*
- California- *Asclepias californica*

Common Pest(s):

Aphis nerii, also called milkweed aphids or oleander aphids, seed bugs, spider mites and longhorn beetles.

CA Native Plant Society Change-Making.com
Ucanr.edu

Growing Information

Native Habitat

Of the fifteen species of milkweed that are native to California, the five listed milkweeds do very well in Riverside County. These drought-tolerant plants play a critical role in supporting a tremendous range of pollinators, and occur in nearly all of the state's eco-regions.

Ideal Planting Window

Seed can be sown in the fall, once the rains start, at a seeding rate of approximately 15 seed every 2 feet. After spreading seeds onto a prepared seedbed, incorporate them into the soil immediately using a rake, harrow, ring-roller, or gentle over-head irrigation. Narrow-leave milkweed in particular seems to do well planted in the fall.

Growing Guidance

Xerces.org



Interesting Facts

The Western monarch population is believed to have declined more than 99% since scientists started tracking populations in the 1980's.

Lands with native milkweed have declined due to land use changes related to agriculture and urbanization.

Milkweed is the only host plant for the Monarch Butterfly, eggs and caterpillars.

Inside milkweed's rough seed pods is a wonderful surprise: The fluffy white floss, attached to milkweed's flat brown seeds, could be used to stuff pillows, mattresses and quilts. It was also carried as tinder to start fires.

During World War II, the regular material used to stuff life jackets was in short supply, so milkweed floss was used as a substitute – it is about six times more buoyant than cork.

Toxic: Wear gloves while handling milkweed and wash hands immediately after handling. Do not rub your eyes, if the sap does get into your eyes seek immediate treatment. Milkweed can be toxic when ingested by people or animals. The Monarch itself become toxic after feeding, this is its protection from predators.

Rcrd.org
Almanac.com

Contact Information



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Native Habitat Description



Fifteen milkweed species are native to California and they can be found in a range of plant habitats, including deserts, riparian zones, forest clearings, and roadsides. Check for which does best in your area.

The milkweed species that are native to California are perennial, and generally go dormant over the winter.

Milkweed flowers are an excellent source of nectar for pollinators, including, hummingbirds, bees and butterflies, they have also been found to attract beneficial insects or parasitoids of agricultural and garden pest.

Narrow-leaf Milkweed has the widest range of milkweeds native to California.

Cnga.org

Historical Uses

Milkweeds have a variety of ethnobotanical uses. Indigenous people used stem fibers to make string, rope, and cloth. Also, the sap was used by some tribes to heal sores and cuts and for wart removal.

In some additional uses, the milkweed sap is boiled in water until it coagulated then is chewed as a gum.

Twine, meshed net, slings made from the inner bark, fiber is separated from the pulp by soaking stems in boiling water.

Milkweed was also used to treat snake bites.

USDA

Ethnobotany.csusm.edu