



# Iowa Monarch Conservation Strategy

## What is the Iowa Monarch Conservation Strategy?

The Iowa Monarch Conservation Strategy identifies the information and resources needed to sustain and advance monarch butterfly conservation efforts in Iowa.

## Why does the monarch butterfly need my help?

The eastern monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) population has experienced an 80% decline over the past two decades. Causes for the population decline include loss of milkweed habitat in the spring and summer breeding ranges of the United States, loss of overwintering habitat in Mexico, and extreme weather events. Iowa is in the center of the monarch's summer breeding range, and roughly 40% of all monarch butterflies that overwinter in Mexico are estimated to come from Iowa and neighboring Midwest states. Expanding monarch habitat in Iowa will play a major role in the recovery of the species.

## What information is included in the strategy?

The strategy includes information about the monarch butterfly, including a summary of its range, its dependence on milkweed and other native plants, current habitat availability in Iowa, Iowa goals to increase habitat, and the types of conservation measures needed to support recovery of the population. The strategy also outlines the monitoring, research, outreach, and administration support necessary for this conservation effort.

## How does this strategy help the monarch butterfly?

As part of the process of developing the strategy, Five Actions to Help Monarchs have been identified (see back). The collaborative efforts that led to the creation of the strategy will continue as the strategy is updated annually. As conservation efforts progress, resources will be in place to distribute information and foster success in Iowa and beyond.

## How can I help?

Since monarch caterpillars need milkweed to survive, one of the primary conservation goals is to establish milkweed as part of healthy natural ecosystems. Iowa's 90,000 farmers have a unique opportunity to play a leading role in conservation efforts. Acres that are less than ideal for production, and areas that are dedicated to conservation programs, such as CRP acres and bioreactors, all provide useful areas for monarch habitat establishment. Potential areas of habitat are available within communities as well; gardens can be added near homes, schools, churches, and within parks. Each of us has a role when it comes to habitat establishment. For more information, read the Five Actions to Help Monarchs (see back) or visit [www.iowamonarchs.info](http://www.iowamonarchs.info).

## Who wrote the strategy?

The Iowa Monarch Conservation Consortium is a community-led organization whose mission is to enhance monarch butterfly reproduction and survival in Iowa through collaborative and coordinated efforts of farmers, private citizens and their organizations. A complete list of consortium collaborators can be found at [www.iowamonarchs.info](http://www.iowamonarchs.info).





# 5 ways to help the monarchs

## Take advantage of Farm Bill programs to establish monarch breeding habitat.

Increasing the number of milkweeds and nectar-producing plants is vitally important for monarch conservation. These efforts also benefit other pollinators and related wildlife conservation goals. Contact your local USDA Service Center for more info and to learn about available programs at [nracs.usda.gov](http://nracs.usda.gov).

## Establish monarch habitat on your land as part of a demonstration project.

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and partners, through the Monarch Butterfly Flyway Project, are restoring/installing monarch habitat along three north-south migration corridors in Iowa. This project will partner to cost-share new pollinator seeding on public land or permanently protected private lands (conservation easements). Contact [Lhein@inhf.org](mailto:Lhein@inhf.org) for info. Four additional grants exist for EQIP-eligible lands, bioreactors, and land near hog confinements. Contact [monarchs@iastate.edu](mailto:monarchs@iastate.edu) to learn more.

## Follow federal pesticide labels and state regulations when applying pesticides labeled as toxic to bees to avoid unnecessary exposure to pollinators and monarchs.

Adjust spray equipment to reduce drift by using low pressures, large droplets, and low boom heights. Avoid applications when wind speed is above 10 miles per hour or wind direction is toward monarch habitat. More at [epa.gov/pollinator-protection](http://epa.gov/pollinator-protection).

## Consider monarch-friendly weed management recommendations for roadsides and other rights-of-way (ROWs).

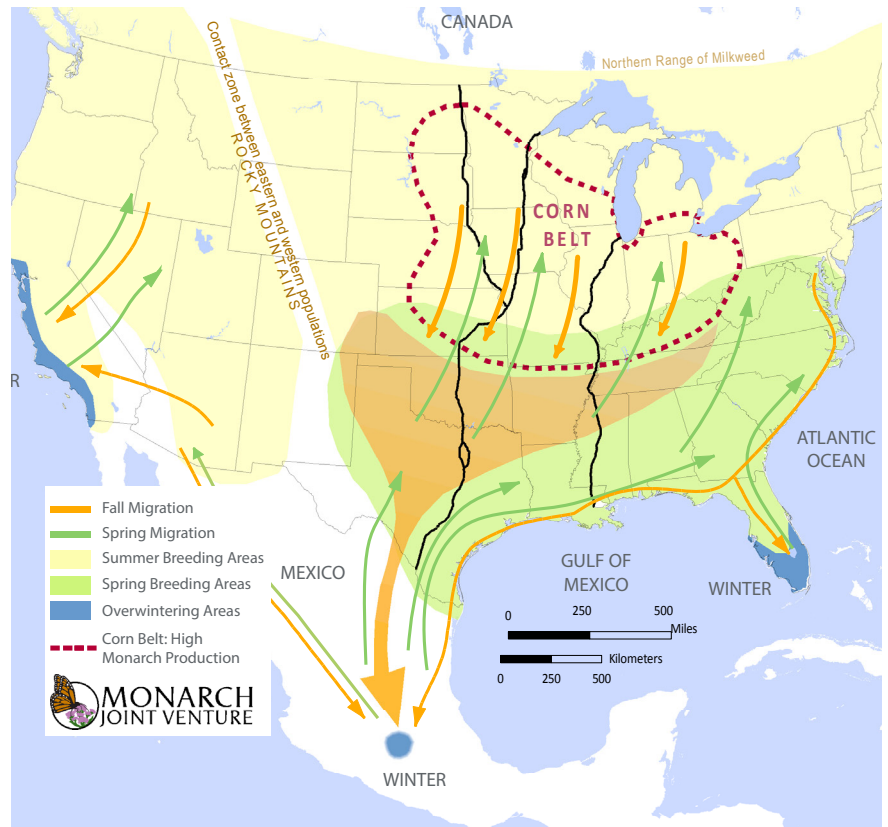
Roadsides offer options for miles of monarch habitat (milkweed and nectar plants). Ask the Iowa DOT or your county roads department to avoid spraying or mowing your roadside and for permission to plant or maintain native plants in your roadside. The Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management program at UNI has no mow/no spray signs, FAQs for landowners, and Iowa's mowing law at: [tallgrassprairiecenter.org/irvm-brochures](http://tallgrassprairiecenter.org/irvm-brochures).

## Establish a Monarch Waystation, a garden with both nectar plants and milkweeds, where monarchs can find nectar and reproduce.

Monarchs lay eggs on milkweeds, the only food monarch caterpillars eat. Adults need flower nectar from spring to fall. More at [monarchwatch.org](http://monarchwatch.org).

not a landowner? you can still help!

- ✓ Participate in one of several Citizen Science Programs in your area -- more info at [monarchjointventure.org](http://monarchjointventure.org)
- ✓ Participate in community events at local gardens, zoos, and county conservation nature centers



**MIGRATORY PHENOMENON** The annual North American monarch migration is one of the longest and most spectacular insect migrations globally. Until the 1970s, the eastern population's migration was clouded in mystery—scientists hadn't yet discovered where the monarchs overwintered! They were finally found clustered in oyamel fir forests in the mountains of Michoacán, in Mexico. DID YOU KNOW? The monarch migration is completed by multiple generations.

**LOCAL CONNECTIONS** Blank Park Zoo created the Plant.Grow.Fly. program with region-specific garden recipes to help you plant the flowers and grasses that our native butterflies and bees need the most. More info at [plantgrowfly.com](http://plantgrowfly.com).

**POLLINATOR POWER** Monarch butterflies pollinate flowers—an integral part of the reproductive process for many species of plants and trees. DID YOU KNOW? Milkweed plants are the only food source for the monarch caterpillar.

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION** Monarchs connect Canada, the US, and Mexico, and citizens help track the spring and fall migrations each year.

**UP CLOSE & PERSONAL** In addition to living in natural areas, monarchs inhabit farmland, rangeland, and visit urban areas to sip nectar from garden plants.

