

The Monarch Butterfly Species Is Threatened

CCE Has Created An Official Monarch Waystation To Help

Visitors to CCE's annex may notice a new wildflower garden as they approach the gate. The small garden, which is located in a sunny alcove to the right of the gate, has a special purpose. It has been designed specifically to provide habitat for monarch butterflies and their caterpillars.

The monarch butterfly has lost over 90% of its habitat in the past 20 years. As a result, the population of monarch butterflies in North America has likewise dropped by over 90%. The monarch is currently in the final stages of being evaluated for inclusion on the federal endangered species list.

The new garden at CCE contains a large concentration of both native and tropical milkweed plants. Milkweeds are the only plants on which monarch butterflies lay their eggs. Similarly, milkweed is the only food that monarch caterpillars can eat. When the caterpillars emerge from their eggs they begin a feeding frenzy that lasts for several weeks, until they are ready to create cocoons. Thus, having large stands of milkweed that the hungry caterpillars can easily travel between is essential to the survival of the species.

The Monarch Waystation also contains a variety native and native-adapted nectar plants. As the monarch adults travel through Central Texas, in addition to laying eggs, they need to consume as much nectar as possible to sustain them on their long journey. Their journey spans the lives of several generations and carries the butterflies from Canada to Mexico and back.

You may especially enjoy visiting the Monarch Waystation around Halloween. The weeks before and after Halloween are typically when Central Texans are most likely to see monarch butterflies. Their distinctive orange and

black wings are good reminders that their fall appearance coincides with our Halloween celebrations, as well as with Mexico's Day of the Dead.

In addition to adding another area of beauty at the school and providing habitat for monarch butterflies and their caterpillars, the Monarch Waystation will be used for educational purposes.

Thank you to the following people and organizations for generously contributing:

Mrs. Denise Kreps and Coach Jo Ann Davis for generously volunteering their time and talents to help initiate and create the Monarch Waystation.

Principal Susan Fambrough, Mr. Norm Hopkins, Mrs. Linda Hopkins, Mr. Brian Bolek, and Mrs. Aimee Babbs for helping with logistics and in other essential ways to make the project work.

Lowe's in Sunset Valley

Home Depot in Sunset Valley





