

Best Milkweed Varieties for North Texas

Our food supply depends on our native pollinators like the Monarch butterfly. But Monarch populations have been in decline for over two decades, threatening our own existence. Monarchs must have Milkweed plants to survive. You can help save them by growing these varieties of Milkweed in your garden.



Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Also called Orange Milkweed, this perennial has large, flat-topped clusters of orange or yellow flowers.

Blooms May to September

Growing Conditions: Full sun and dry or lightly moist soil. It is highly drought tolerant.

Height: 1 to 2 ft.



Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)

Also known as Pink Milkweed, this perennial has large blossoms of small, rose-purple flowers clustered at the top of a tall, branching stem.

Blooms June to October

Growing Conditions: Needs lots of water. Prefers partial shade and moist to wet soil

Height: 2 to 5 ft.



Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias Speciosa*)

This perennial has large, oval, blue-green leaves and spherical clusters of rose-colored flowers. The flowers occur at the top of the stem and on stalks from leaf axils.

Blooms May to September

Growing Conditions: Prefers full sun but will tolerate partial shade and moderately moist soil.

Height: Usually 2 to 3 ft but can reach 6 ft under favorable conditions.



Antelope Horns Milkweed (Asclepias asperula)

Spider Milkweed, as it is also known, is a clumping perennial with stems that are densely covered with minute hairs. As the green seed pods grow, they curve to resemble antelope horns. It has pale, greenish-yellow flowers, tinged maroon.

Blooms March to October

Growing Conditions: Full sun and dry soil. Drought tolerant.

Height: 1 to 2 ft.



Green Milkweed (Asclepias viridis)

This perennial is very similar to Antelope Horn -- so much so that it is also called Green Antelope Horn Milkweed, except that its white flowers lack the "horns" seen on true Antelope Horn Milkweed. Green Milkweed is common in pastures from Kansas to Texas. Generally avoided by cattle and horses, it can be found along roadsides, ditches, prairies, open areas, and other areas with little vegetative competition.

Blooms May to August

Growing Conditions: Full sun. Cold, heat and drought tolerant.

Height: Up to 4 ft



Whorled Milkweed (Asclepias verticillata)

Unlike the other Milkweeds above, Whorled Milkweed has narrow, linear leaves that whorl along the stem. A perennial, its small, greenish-white flowers occur in flat-topped clusters on the upper part of the stem.

Blooms May to September

Growing Conditions: Prefers full sun and dry soil but will tolerate moderate shade. tolerant.

Height: 1 to 3 ft.

Notice the differences between the various varieties. Antelope Horns Milkweed starts to bloom much earlier than the other varieties beginning in early March when Monarchs are just beginning to arrive from their over-wintering areas. It continues to bloom into October as Monarchs are heading back to their over-wintering grounds. By comparison, Showy Milkweed and Butterfly Weed don't begin blooming until May when there is a larger number of monarchs in the area. Finally, Swamp Milkweed comes out last in June as most monarchs have reached their summer foraging ranges.

Warning: Do not spray Milkweed plants with any type of insecticide or herbicide as these can kill the adult butterflies and/or cause birth defects in their young.