

# Common milkweed



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(*Asclepias syriaca* L.)

Common milkweed is a robust plant native to North America and is best known as a primary food source for the monarch butterfly. The plant is a perennial that grows 3 to 5 feet tall and reproduces by underground rootstocks and seeds. The stem is erect and fleshy with large opposite leaves 3 to 5 inches wide and 6 to 10 inches long. A thick, white, milky latex is found throughout the plant. Flowers are arranged in tight clusters at the top of the plant and are pink to white. Common milkweed has shallow fibrous roots. Milkweed grows in a wide range of soil moisture conditions, but can become dense under medium or high moisture levels.

Seed pods are 3 to 5 inches long and contain dozens of flat reddish-brown seeds with tufts of hairs that allow the seed to travel in the wind. Milkweed has been used for medicinal, industrial, decorative purposes and even for food, despite having some degree of toxicity. Common milkweed is extremely difficult to control.

