

Creating Meadows Monarch Waystations



A meadow of native wildflowers and grasses is not only a beautiful sight but also a wonderful wildlife habitat that will provide food, shelter and nesting sights for a variety of birds, mammals and of course insects like the Monarch butterfly.

Establishing a meadow generally takes 3-5 years. It requires eliminating existing, non-native plants that are not only growing but also have seeds dormant in the soil. Eliminating these existing plants can take time but also the seeds of the new plants will take time to grow.

In the first season, they will focus on developing roots. The second year they will continue to build but it may not be until the third year that you see flowers. Planting plant plugs in addition to seeds can get some plants started more quickly. Eventually the native plants and grasses will outcompete the non-native species. Engaging an experienced native plant landscape designer will help you get off on the right foot. Your landscape designer may recommend including annuals in your initial planting to provide some color while the meadow becomes established.

These sites provide a good overview for creating a meadow:

The LadyBird Johnson Wildflower Center:

<http://www.wildflower.org/howto/show.php?id=5&frontpage=true>)

Maryland Department of Natural Resources:

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Habitat/WildAcres/wawildflowers.asp>

In creating your meadow to support Monarch butterflies, include a variety of milkweed plants (Common milkweed, Swamp milkweed and Butterflweed) and a variety of native perennials. Asters and goldenrods should be included as part of the foundation of your Monarch Waystation meadow because of their importance during fall migration.

In addition to these plants, include a selection of native nectar plants such as New York Ironweed, Joe Pye Weed, Boneset, Wingstem, and Bergamot. You can also include other plants that act as hosts to different butterflies such as Cassia, Monkey flower, rudbeckia. Native grasses and sedges also act as host plants to certain butterflies as well.

When designing your meadow, include a walking trail around the perimeter or through the meadow.

Local Experts for Meadow Restoration and Creation:

Lush Life Landscapes/Susan Abraham: <http://www.lushlifelandscapes.com/>

WildWood Landscape/Jason Dengler: <http://www.wildwoodlandscape.com/>

Magee Design/John Magee: <http://www.john-magee.com/>

Sources for native seeds for our eco-region:

Ernst Seed: <http://www.ernstseed.com/> [Ernst also has a Mid-Atlantic mix and a Pollinator mix available. You will want to ask for more milkweed to be added if you select a mix]

Sources for plant plugs:

Sylva Native Nursery & Seed Company: <http://www.sylvanative.com/>

North Creek Nursery: <http://www.northcreeknurseries.com/>

Chesapeake Natives: [http://chesapeakenatives.org/Chesapeake Natives/HOME.html](http://chesapeakenatives.org/Chesapeake_Natives/HOME.html)