

NewsLeaf Friends of the Arboretum Newsletter

Building positive relationships between people and the land through support of the UW–Madison Arboretum

Winter 2022

Volume XXXVII No. 1

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Kathy King

The Native Plant Sale is back in the tent for 2022!

Save the date! May 14th, 2022

Early shopping for Friends at 9 A.M.

General public from 10 A.M. until plants sell out

AND

Last year's wildly popular online Native Plant Sale is back, too!

Order between January 1 and March 15, 2022 for convenient curbside pickup in May. Our online store: foamadison.org

Online offerings include our most popular species for your native garden:

- Trees and shrubs will be picked up curbside at McKay Garden Center in Oregon, WI, in May. Bear in mind that some of these are in large (5-gallon) pots, or more than 4 feet tall, and may need a larger vehicle for pickup.
- Trays of wildflowers and/or grasses will be picked up curbside at the Arboretum the week of May 9. We will contact you in late April to schedule your pickup.
- Selected species will be available in single-species full and half trays of 16–32 plants. **Please note: there is a 16 plant minimum order.**
- Garden mixes will also be available for rain gardens, savanna gardens, and pollinators (support monarchs or hummingbirds, and participate in citizen science by reporting your sightings!)

Native Plant Sale™



For a shortcut to foamadison.org, scan this QR code with a smart-phone. Open your phone's camera and aim it at this black and white square. In a moment, a URL link will appear on the phone's screen. Tap the link to take the shortcut.

FOA office phone: 608-890-2555

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In-tent offerings will include a wider variety of species, available as individual plants. For the first time, we will also offer our popular garden mixes (for rain gardens, savanna gardens, monarch butterflies, or hummingbirds) in the tent! Note: trees and shrubs this year are only available online, not at the tent sale.

The tent sale will be located on the Arboretum Lawn.



Partnership with Journey North



Our popular Citizen Science kits in collaboration with Journey North return for 2022! These kits focus on nectaring plants for 2 migrating species that Wisconsinites treasure, Monarchs and Hummingbirds.

Support the Arboretum, provide food for monarchs and hummingbirds and join Journey North! Choose either Monarchs! Or Hummingbirds! Citizen science kits. Each kit includes:

- A colorful garden sign to tell passersby that your planting is part of a citizen science project
- Information about registering with Journey North to submit your observations and watch the migration unfold on real time interactive maps
- A kit of native plants—8 packs specifically designed for nectaring either monarchs or hummingbirds

2022 Native Plant Sale Order—due March 15

You may complete your order online OR fill out the order form below. DO NOT DO BOTH.

Please see the FOA website (foamadison.org) for complete information about the plant or mix you wish to order. There is a 16-plant minimum.

Species or Mix Name	Number of Plants (Minimum 16)	Unit Price	Extended Price
_____	x		=

Buyer information (required for further communication about pickup—please print clearly.)

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____
 Email _____

Grand Total \$ _____

Check payable to Friends of the Arboretum enclosed.
 Please charge my credit card:
 Credit card # _____
 Expiration date mm/yy _____ 3-digit code _____
 Name as it appears on card: _____

Order confirmation, including pickup instructions, will be sent in April.

Questions? Email Mary Chandler (npscordinator@foamadison.org) or call (608) 890-2555 and leave a message.

Online ordering preferred
foamadison.org



Mail order form and payment to:
 Friends of the Arboretum
 1207 Seminole Highway
 Madison, WI 53711



Title to Come

If you're older than about 40, have spent a lot of time outside in the Upper Midwestern U.S. since you were a child, and have an eye for butterflies, you've probably noticed a decline in monarch butterfly numbers since your childhood. Perhaps you've searched for monarch eggs and caterpillars in milkweed plants, brought in a few every summer to raise on your kitchen table, or marveled at the adults as they flew by on the roadside, soared over open fields, or visited your backyard garden. If you are noticing fewer, the decline you've seen is backed up by data from monitoring programs that document eggs and caterpillars on milkweed (the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project, coordinated jointly by the UW–Madison Arboretum and the Monarch Joint Venture—www.mlmp.org) or the area occupied by monarchs in their overwintering sites in Mexico (see graph at www.monarchbutterflyfund.org). Scientists use data from projects like these to understand drivers of the decline, and to set conservation goals.

Before thinking about why monarchs are having a tough time and what we can do to help them, it's useful to understand their amazing annual cycle of breeding, migration, and overwintering. Most of the monarchs we see in the Upper Midwestern U.S. in late August and September are heading south to central Mexico, where they'll stay on high mountaintops all winter. Unlike their spring and summer counterparts, these individuals do not reproduce a few days after emerging as adults, but wait until mid-March, when they mate and lay eggs on milkweed plants as they move northward. These butterflies get as far as the middle of the U.S. before their 8–9 month lifespan is over. Their offspring are much shorter-lived, starting to breed soon after emerging and only living 4–6 weeks as adults. They continue the northward flight where their parents left off, laying eggs as they recolonize their summer breeding range—approximately the northeastern quarter of the U.S. and border areas of Canada. There are then 2–3 non-migratory generations before the migratory cycle starts again with the final generation of the year. The adults in every generation depend on available nectar plants to fuel flight and reproduction.

Another population west of the Rocky Mountains follows a similar pattern, migrating to sites along the California coast. This migratory pattern leaves monarchs vulnerable at many places; for the cycle to continue, they need safe habitat and suitable weather in their vast breeding grounds, along their migratory pathways, and at their much smaller winter sites.

What drivers caused monarch numbers to plummet over the past few decades? Not surprisingly, weather plays a role. Hot and dry conditions tend to be associated with low monarch numbers, and so do cool and wet conditions. Like Goldilocks, monarchs prefer conditions that aren't too hot or too cold, but "just right". The effects of weather are complex, but in general, monarch migration has evolved over eons, and changes in the conditions they experience over the course of their annual migratory cycle present challenges to the butterflies themselves and the milkweed and nectar plants they depend on. Climate change has big impacts on monarchs and many other species, including humans, and it is important that we do what we can to minimize greenhouse gas emissions.

But the decline in monarch population is also associated with habitat loss. The organisms that depended on rich and diverse ecosystems before European settlement were pushed into the margins as bountiful prairies were converted to agricultural lands of the central U.S.—the roadsides, hedgerows, and less desirable land that couldn't be easily farmed. In a way, monarchs were lucky because they used a host plant that grew well in these margins, and could tolerate "old-fashioned" weed control methods in the fields themselves. However, changes in weed control practices meant that "corn-belt" land where monarchs' milkweed host plants used to grow between corn and soybean rows is no longer available. Most corn and soybeans are now genetically modified to withstand herbicides (starting with glyphosate or Round-up, and now including several other herbicides) that kill milkweed. Unfortunately, monarchs' luck has run out, at least with respect to row-crop fields, and in many places even the margins are being turned into agricultural fields.



Karen Oberhauser

As was so evident in summer 2021, different parts of monarchs' range can experience very different weather conditions; while the western U.S. was burning with hot and dry conditions, the eastern U.S. suffered severe storms, and we in the Midwestern U.S. had a fairly "normal" summer. Having as much habitat as possible available over the entire range of monarchs will increase the chances that they have a good year somewhere.

The good news is that so many people are motivated to help monarchs, and that monarchs can live in small pieces of good habitat (and even some not-so-good habitat; I've found them on milkweed plants growing in cracks in the sidewalk). In a single year, a lawn can be converted to a habitat that resembles the prairie or savanna that was here before, harboring dozens of species of the birds and insects that used to live here, including, if we plant milkweed, monarchs.

You can help, right in your own backyard, to save a familiar butterfly that you're probably seeing less of lately. If you make some space for that familiar butterfly, your backyard habitat can act as a bridge to other habitats, creating a habitat corridor. Neighbor after neighbor, planting milkweed and linking nature preserves and neighborhood parks, can help to create habitat corridors that can help all pollinators.

*Karen Oberhauser, Director,
UW–Madison Arboretum*



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Leslie Ladd

Your FOA Donations at Work

Text to come

— Erica Lee, Development Specialist
UW–Madison Arboretum

FOA Trip to Grady Tract

On a crisp October morning a group of 12 Friends ventured across the Beltline to one of the Arboretum’s jewels—the Grady Tract. Michael Hansen, Arboretum land care manager, led the group on a 2-mile walk through resplendent restored prairie and around areas of oak savanna that helped us envision what this area looked like in the 1800s. Prior to UW acquisition in 1940, the majority of this 200-acre site belonged to the Grady family who farmed portions of it, while other portions were not farmed and exist today as “remnant”—meaning they have never been plowed or cleared.

Beating back invasive plants such as Oriental bittersweet, common buckthorn, garlic mustard, and honeysuckle is a big part of what keeps the land care team busy and we were lucky to see the forestry mower in action. Harvesting seed is another fall job that we got to see being done. As we were walking back to our starting point, we talked about how Friends’ donations support Arboretum programs and as if on cue, a student ranger, along with the lead ranger, appeared! Hearing them talk about how important their role is in interpreting the Arboretum to the public made us even more proud that Friends gives such strong support to student workers.

Hanging On

See how the oak tree keeps
its old dead leaves all winter,
until the March winds blow,
how the leaves cling and resist,
dreaming that sweet sap will somehow flow
through their withered stems
while tender new leaves wait.
All other trees let go in Autumn’s cold,
as we should have, you and I, at our season’s end,
not waiting for rough winds to decide for us
when to release our hold.

— Sylvia T. O’Neill (1980)