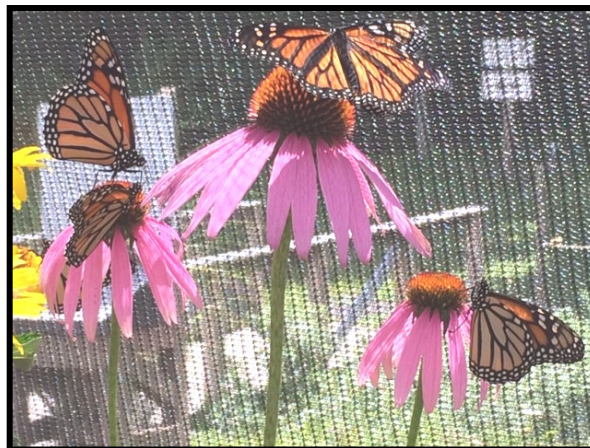


What You Can Do to Help the Monarchs



- ▶ • Avoid using chemicals in your yard.
- Plant common (Asclepias syriaca) and swamp (Asclepias incarnate) milkweed.
- Plant nectar plants such as marigold, cosmos, aster, cone-flower, zinnia, phlox, sunflower, black-eyed Susan, and Agastache.
- Provide a water source either in a small container or a puddle in the soil.



Sources: Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and monarchjointventure.org

Photos: J. Furgal and J. Herrmann

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Oneida County Master Gardener Volunteers

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Oneida County Master Gardener Volunteers



The Butterflies Return!



website: cceoneida.com
facebook.com/cceoneida
Phone: 315-736-3394

It's not your imagination

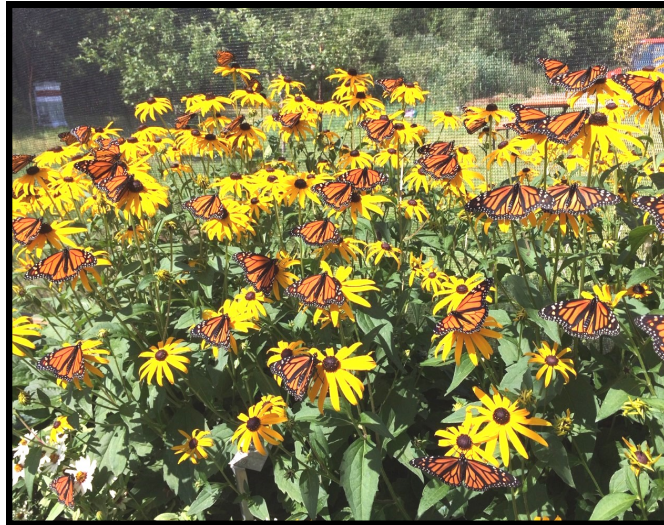
The monarch butterfly population is in serious decline and is at risk of becoming extinct in the next 20 years. "The Xerces Society of Invertebrate Conservation, a non-profit group that conducts an annual census of the Western Monarch, reported that only 1,914 monarchs overwintered in California in 2020. The Eastern Monarch is also in perilous decline. According to monarchjointventure.org, their population has decreased 26% since last year.

Scientists have found a variety of causes; namely, the increased use of herbicides, which not only kill weeds but has also decimated the population of native milkweed, which is the sole food source of the monarch caterpillar." The increased use of pesticides has also had a serious impact.

As we here at Cornell Cooperative Extension have found out, herbicides and pesticides aren't the only reason monarchs aren't thriving.

In 2015 our butterfly house was filled to overflowing with monarch butterflies. As you can see from the following picture, dozens of monarchs inhabited this space feasting on an assortment of perennials and annuals.

Hundreds of Oneida County residents and tourists were on hand to witness



each stage of the monarch's life cycle and enjoyed the beauty of nature.

At the same time humans were enjoying the butterflies, so were its predators; in this case, the spined soldier bug. Apparently it wasn't hard for it to gain access. A little tear in the butterfly net, open doors, and/or hitching a ride on unsuspecting visitors' clothes or shoes gave it full access.

Unfortunately, we were not aware of the problem in 2016 until a former gardener actually got a photograph of the spined soldier bug eating the chrysalises hanging from the net. Within a day, it had consumed all of the chrysalises. In spite of our efforts in 2017 and 2018 to eradicate the bug, we were

unable to provide a safe, secure environment for the monarchs. After two years of rest, some voluntary and some enforced because of the pandemic, we are ready to start anew. We have a new net, new signage, and plan to try a new way to protect the chrysalis from any and all predators. Hopefully, this will allow the monarchs to survive and thrive.

Enjoy your time in the butterfly house and on the grounds of Cornell Cooperative Extension in Oneida County.



Spined Soldier Bug

**Oneida County
Master Gardener Volunteers**

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