



# WINTER SOWING



Illinois Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## OBJECTIVES

CREATE A MINI GREENHOUSE FOR GROWING MILKWEED SEEDS.

PROVIDE SUITABLE HABITAT FOR MONARCH CATERPILLARS.

## MATERIALS

16OZ. PLASTIC WATER BOTTLE  
SOIL (NOT MOISTURE CONTROL)  
KNIFE OR CUTTING TOOL  
DRILL  
MILKWEED SEEDS  
WATER

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. WHAT TYPE OF HABITAT DO MONARCHS NEED?
2. HOW DO YOU GROW MILKWEED?

## CONCEPTS

- MONARCHS NEED MILKWEED FOR THEIR YOUNG.
- EVERY PLANT NEEDS WATER AND LIGHT TO GROW.
- HUMANS CAN HELP PROTECT NATURAL HABITAT AREAS.

## FACTS

- MILKWEED SEED NEEDS A PERIOD OF COLD IN ORDER TO GERMINATE. THIS IS CALLED **STRATIFICATION**.
- MONARCH CATERPILLARS ONLY EAT MILKWEED.
- MILKWEEDS ARE HERBACEOUS (SOFT-STEMMED), PERENNIAL PLANTS.
- CURRENTLY, FIVE SPECIES OF MILKWEEDS ARE LISTED AS ENDANGERED IN ILLINOIS WITH ONE OF THOSE SPECIES ALSO LISTED AS THREATENED FEDERALLY.



## INTEREST APPROACH- ENGAGEMENT



### ASK A QUESTION(S):

1. WHY DO MONARCHS NEED MILKWEED?
2. WHAT OTHER THINGS DO YOU THINK BUTTERFLIES NEED?

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOTTLE, MAKE A CUT AROUND THE BOTTLE TAKING CARE NOT TO CUT COMPLETELY AROUND. LEAVE A HINGE. (ALREADY DONE FOR YOU)
- DRILL DRAINAGE HOLES IN THE BOTTOM OF BOTTLE. (ALREADY DONE FOR YOU)
- ADD SOIL MIX AND WATER UNTIL SOIL IS MOIST.
- ADD SEEDS AND LIGHTLY COVER THEM WITH MORE SOIL.
- PLACE A PIECE OF TAPE ON THE HINGE TO HOLD THE BOTTLE CLOSED.
- AFTER THE FIRST FROST (OR AROUND THANKSGIVING) REMOVE THE LID AND PLACE OUTSIDE IN A PROTECTED PLACE.
- LEAVE OUTSIDE OVER WINTER. SEEDS NEED AT LEAST 6 WEEKS OF COLD IN ORDER TO GERMINATE.

### IN THE WINTER:

CHECK ON THE BOTTLE OCCASIONALLY TO MAKE SURE IT IS STANDING UPRIGHT SO WATER CAN GET IN.

### IN THE SPRING:

ONCE THE DANGER OF FROST HAS PASSED, PLANT SEEDLINGS IN YOUR GARDEN. ENJOY WATCHING THE MILKWEED GROW. BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MONARCHS.



RESOURCES: [HTTPS://WWW2.ILLINOIS.GOV/DNR/PUBLICATIONS/DOCUMENTS/00000835.PDF](https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/publications/documents/00000835.pdf)