



The background of the cover is a collage of nine photographs of various milkweed species. The top row shows a close-up of white flowers, a cluster of bright orange flowers, and a cluster of pink flowers. The middle row features a close-up of a large, spiky purple flower, a close-up of a cluster of small white flowers, and a close-up of a cluster of small pink flowers. The bottom row includes a close-up of a cluster of small pink flowers, a photograph of a tall, slender milkweed plant in a desert landscape, and a close-up of a large, green, pointed flower bud.

Milkweed Identification Guide

Milkweed Identification Guide



How to use this guide

This guide of 12 species of milkweed found in the United States includes identification hints, phenophase pictures, states where the milkweed is most likely grow. These hints and pictures are intended to help our observers have confidence submitting two key pieces of information needed when making a Milkweed and Monarch project observation – the milkweed species and the flowering stage of the plants in the patch.

Along with the pictures of the phenophases provided, here is a good rule of thumb for phenophase identification.

Early Flowering-

When a few flowers are open (less than 5%).

Middle Flowering-

When half or more of the flowers are completely open (50% or more).

Late Flowering-

When most flowers have wilted or fallen off (over 95%).

Milkweed Identification Guide



Common Milkweed (<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>)	1
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Common milkweed

(*Asclepias syrica*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Broad leaves with hairy undersides arranged opposite each other on a stem
- Contains white, milky sap (latex)
- Globes of pale pink flowers

Middle
Flowering



States where it may be found:

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Vermont, Wisconsin, West Virginia



Late
Flowering

Butterfly weed

(*Asclepias tuberosa*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering



Late
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Lance-shaped leaves alternating on the stem
- Clear sap
- Unique showy orange flower

States where it may be found:

Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Vermont, Wisconsin, West Virginia

Swamp milkweed

(*Asclepias incarnata*)



Identification Hints:

- Opposite, long, skinny leaves
- Deep pink or white flowers
- Often near waterways in damp or wet soil

States where it may be found:

Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering



Late
Flowering

Antelope-horns milkweed

(*Asclepias asperula*)



Identification Hints:

- Hairy stems with long, narrow leaves
- Pale, greenish-yellow flowers, tinged with a deep purple or maroon color

States where it may be found:

Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah

Phenophases



Early
Flowering

Middle
Flowering



Late
Flowering

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photo?
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budburst.org](mailto:info@budburst.org)
Thanks!

Purple milkweed

(*Asclepias purpurascens*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Leaves are hairy and opposite on stem
- Flowers are deep magenta red

States where it may be found:

Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin

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Late
Flowering

Showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Leaves opposite in stem and long, smooth, and oval-shaped
- Pale pink flowers, shaped like stars, in spherical clusters

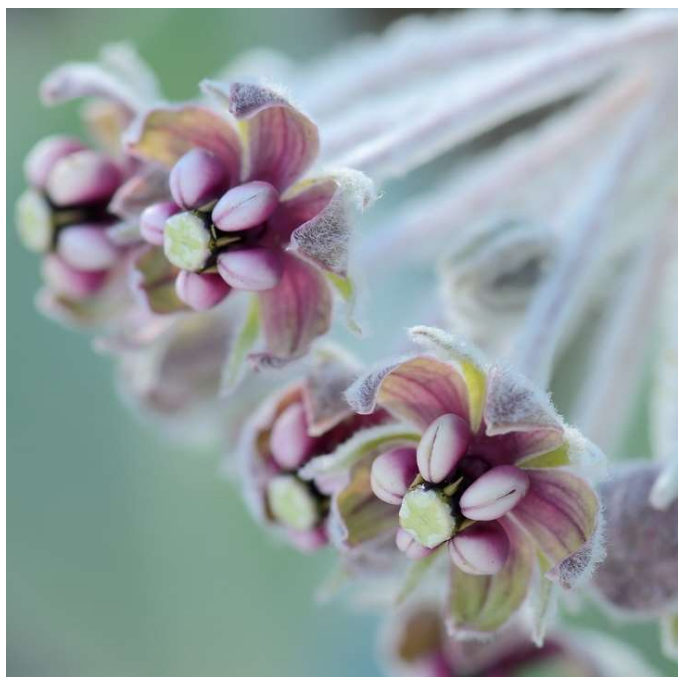
States where it may be found:

Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming

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Late
Flowering

California milkweed (*Asclepias californica*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Thick, white, woolly stems that bend or run along the ground
- Milky sap
- Lavender, deep purple, or pink flowers

States where it may be found:

California

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photo?
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Late
Flowering

White milkweed (*Asclepias variegata*)



Phenophases

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Early
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Small, white flowers with purplish centers in rounded cluster
- Stems with opposite, wide leaves

Middle
Flowering



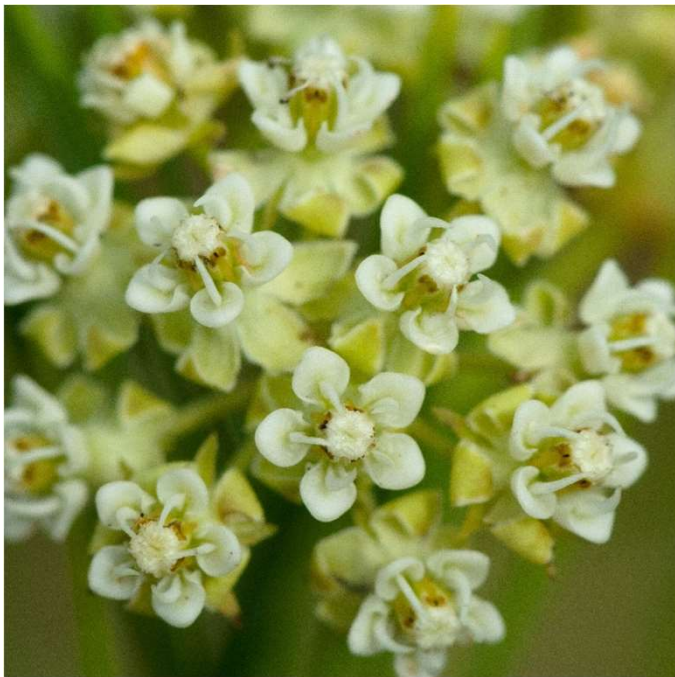
States where it may be found:

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia

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Late
Flowering

Whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Single-stem with straight, narrow leaves in a whorled arrangement
- Small, greenish-white flowers in a flat top cluster

States where it may be found:

Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

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Late
Flowering

Mexican whorled milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering



Late
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Sometimes called Narrowleaf milkweed
- Stem with narrow, whorled leaves
- Clusters of greenish-white flowers often tinged with purple

States where it may be found:

California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington

Desert milkweed (*Asclepias erosa*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering



Late
Flowering

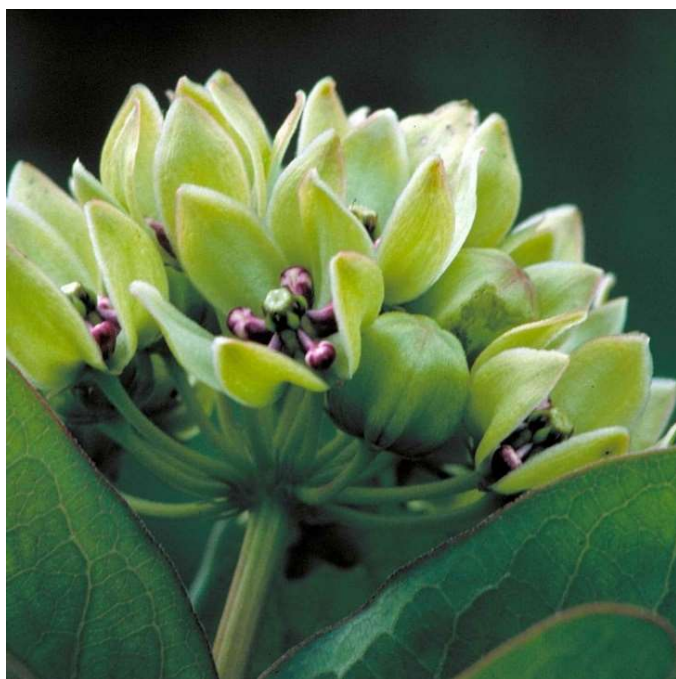
Identification Hints:

- Green to yellow stem with leaves that can be mostly smooth or covered in fine white hairs
- White to yellow flowers

States where it may be found:

Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah

Green milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*)



Phenophases



Early
Flowering



Middle
Flowering

Identification Hints:

- Stem with alternating leaf arrangement
- Leaf edges are often wavy
- Flowers are white with some rose or purple at the center
- Milky sap

States where it may be found:

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia

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Late
Flowering