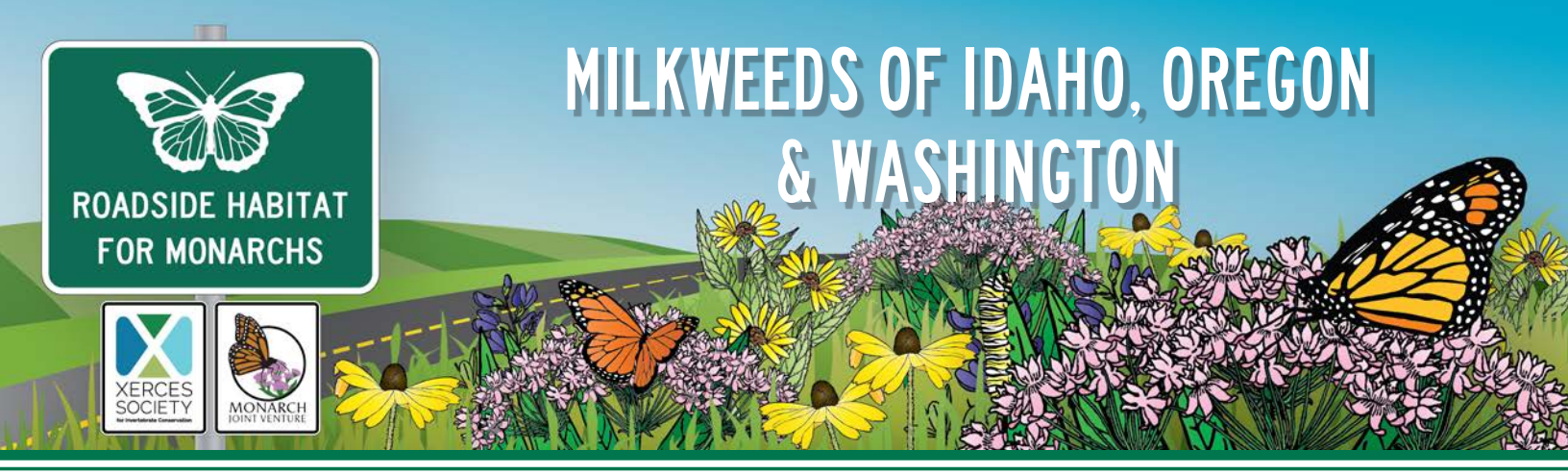
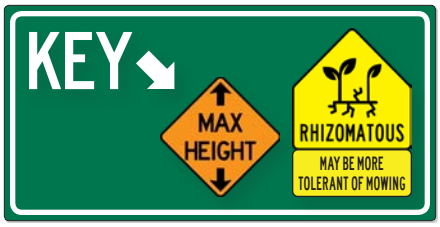


MILKWEEDS OF IDAHO, OREGON & WASHINGTON

Milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) are herbaceous perennial plants named for their milky sap. These plants occur in a wide range of habitats, including intact natural communities on roadsides and highly disturbed roadsides. As required host plants for monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) caterpillars, milkweeds play an essential role in the butterfly's life cycle (see reverse). Vegetation management that allows milkweeds to persist can support monarchs. This guide can help you recognize the most common native species found on roadsides in your region.

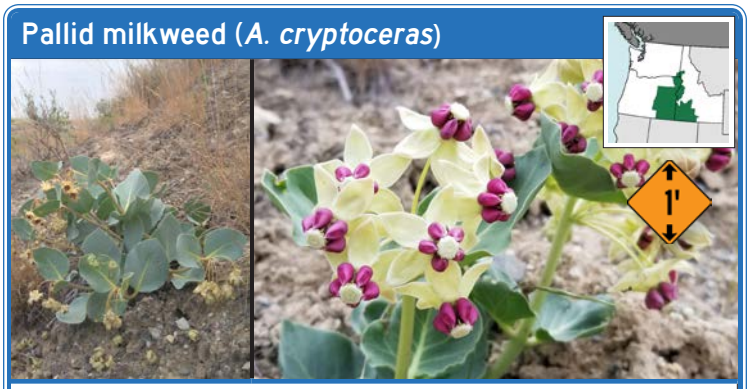


The most common milkweeds in roadsides in Idaho, Oregon & Washington (in alphabetical order):

Heartleaf milkweed (*A. cordifolia*)

PLANT: Spreading to upright stout stems; mostly hairless. **LEAVES:** Opposite heart- to lance-shaped; with waxy coating. **HABITAT:** Slopes and hillsides in woodlands, shrub steppe, chaparral, and evergreen forest (SW Oregon only). **SOILS:** Rocky, gravelly; dry. **BLOOM:** Apr–Jul; red-purple to violet with pink or white tinges.

Pallid milkweed (*A. cryptoceras*)

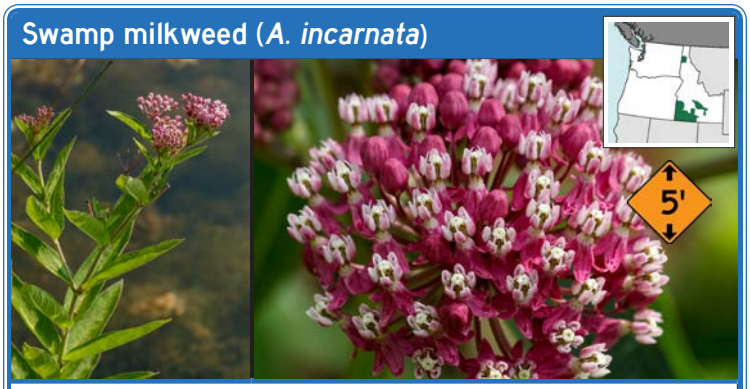


PLANT: Stout prostrate spreading stems, rarely branched; smooth. **LEAVES:** Opposite, broad oval- to heart-shaped; waxy and smooth. **HABITAT:** Desert washes, slopes, and hillsides, in pinyon-juniper woodland, sagebrush, salt desert shrublands, and aspen zones. **SOILS:** Sandy to clayey, gypsum, or serpentine; dry. **BLOOM:** Apr–Jun; greenish yellow and red or dark violet.

Narrowleaf milkweed (*A. fascicularis*)

PLANT: Thin upright branched stems; smooth. **LEAVES:** Opposite to whorled; narrow to lance-shaped; folded lengthwise; mostly smooth. **HABITAT:** Grasslands, wetland-riparian areas, chaparral, open forests, banks of streams and irrigation ditches, disturbed areas, fallow fields. **SOILS:** Sandy to clayey, tolerates saline; dry–moist. **BLOOM:** May–Oct; dusky pink to rose with touches of white.

Swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*)



PLANT: One to many upright branched stems; smooth or with short hairs. **LEAVES:** Opposite; lance-shaped or narrow; with few short hairs. **HABITAT:** Grasslands and ditches, edges of ponds, lakes, streams (Idaho only). **SOILS:** Silty to loamy or clayey; moist–wet, tolerates some mesic. **BLOOM:** Jun–Sep; pink, light purple.

(Continued on next page.)

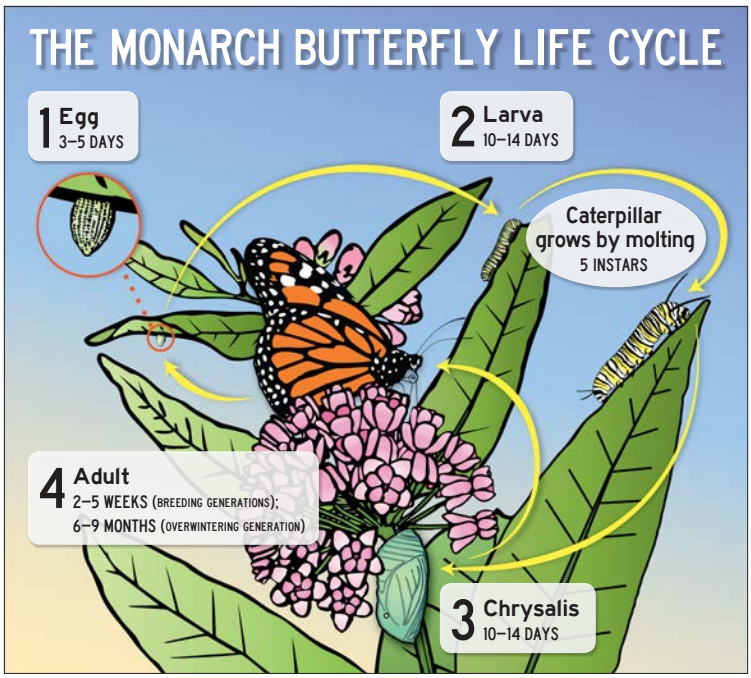
Most common milkweed species *continued*

Showy milkweed (*A. speciosa*)

PLANT: Stout upright, unbranched stems; hairy. **LEAVES:** Opposite; broad and oval-shaped; hairy. **HABITAT:** Grasslands, fallow fields, disturbed areas, edges of rivers, ponds. **SOILS:** Sandy to loamy; dry–moist. **BLOOM:** May–Aug; pink and cream or white; flowers are the largest of American species.

Additional Resources:

- For more information on monarchs and roadsides, including monitoring, visit: tinyurl.com/MJV-Monarchs-Roadsides
- Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper: www.monarchmilkweedmapper.org
- Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation: xerces.org
- Monarch Joint Venture: monarchjointventure.org



Multiple generations of monarchs are produced over the spring and summer, with the fall generation migrating to overwintering sites. You can monitor monarchs or milkweeds; see Additional Resources above.

Other monarch nectar plants in the region:

Additional milkweeds that occur rarely in SE Idaho: *A. asperula* and *A. subverticillata*.

Note: Due to the paucity of native milkweed species in northern portions of the Pacific Northwest, monarchs are less likely to seen breeding in the region. Including high value monarch nectar plants will support adult monarchs that migrate through the region. Visit xerces.org/monarch-nectar-plants for more monarch nectar plants.

Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*)

PLANT: Slow-growing, rhizomatous perennial; 7′ max. **LEAVES:** Alternate; lance-shaped; with fine hairs. **SOILS/HABITAT:** Any; moist–wet; meadows, prairies, fallow fields, banks of rivers, streams, ditches. **BLOOM:** Jul–Oct; yellow.

Rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericamia nauseosa*)

PLANT: Shrub with erect, rubbery stems; densely hairy; 8′ max. **LEAVES:** Alternate; linear; hairy. **SOILS/HABITAT:** Any; dry; disturbed sites, roadsides, scrub, degraded grasslands, rangeland, fallow fields. **BLOOM:** Aug–Oct; yellow.

Western goldentop (*Euthamia occidentalis*)

PLANT: Rhizomatous perennial, numerous erect stems; 6′ max. **LEAVES:** Alternate; narrow, grass-like. **SOILS/HABITAT**: Loamy, sandy, clayey; wet; marshes/wetlands, meadows, grassland, scrubland, banks of rivers, streams, ditches. **BLOOM:** Jul–Sep; yellow and green.

Common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)

PLANT: Annual, single erect stem; coarse with rough hairs; 10′ max. **LEAVES:** Alternate; oval- to heart--shaped; with rough hairs. **SOILS/HABITAT**: Any; dry; disturbed sites, grasslands, meadows, foothills. **BLOOM:** Jul–Sep; yellow with red, orange, green, or brown.

Maps & Distribution Data:

These profiles are derived from regional floras and field guides and Woodson's *The North American Species of* Asclepias (1954). Most common species are abundant across the states and are found in roadsides. Less common species might not occur in all states, have a limited distribution across a state, or may be less common in roadsides. Additional species may be uncommon in roadsides, have a small distribution in a state or region, or are uncommon or rare. The range maps indicate counties where species have been observed (but may be incomplete), and were created by USDA-NRCS using the latest data from the USDA's PLANTS database (https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov).

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PHOTO CREDITS: Jonathan Coffin / flickr (*Euthamia occidentalis*); Tom Potterfield / flickr (*A. incarnata*); Xerces Society / Eric Lee-Mader (*Solidago canadensis*) Xerces Society / Stephanie McKnight (*A. cordifolia, A cryptoceras, A. fascicularis, A. speciosa, Ericamia nauseosa, Helianthus annuus*).

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