



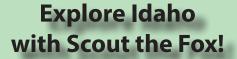
Showy Milkweed

(Asclepias speciosa)





Showy milkweed contains a milk looking substance that you can see when the leaves or stem is broken.







- Rosey-purple and pink star shaped flowers.
- The flowers make up a circular flower head (Umbel) which measures about 3 inches across.
- Once blooming it produces seed pods up to three inches long.

Habitat:

- Showy Milkweed enjoys full or nearly full sun.
- Tolerates drought and soils that are low in nutrients.
- You can often find them in pastures, meadows, forest clearings, and ditch banks





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Fun Facts!

- Milkweed is the only host plant to Monarch Butterfly caterpillars. As such, Milkweed is vital to the survival of the Monarch species.
- Seed pods contain many seeds connected to a cottony floss. This
 allows the seed to spread by wind similarly to a dandelion.
- The milk like substance tastes bitter and is poisonous to humans and animals. This bitterness is what makes Monarch Butterflies bitter tasting and protects them from predators.







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Help Save the Milkweed!

- Planting Milkweed seed is a great way to help. Milkweed comes in several varieties, check your planting zone and plant Milkweed that is native to your region.
- In late summer check with your State Parks Visitor Center to see if there is Milkweed seed available.
- Avoid herbicides when possible. The same herbicide that kills other weeds kill Milkweed as well.

ACTIVITY TIME

- 1. Look up different varieties of Milkweed. See which ones are native to your area.
- 2. Check out a patch of Milkweed and see if you can spot a Monarch caterpillar (yellow, black and white striped) or chrysalis (light green with golden dots and then turns transparent).

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation parksandrecreation.idaho.gov





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VOCABULARY

Umbel - an umbel is a group of flowers that consists of several short flower stalks which spread from a common point, somewhat like an umbrella.

Drought - a prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water.

Chrysalis - a moth or butterfly at the stage of growth when it is turning into an adult and is enclosed in a hard case.



Thank you to Idaho Fish and Game, The Monarch Joint Venture, and to The National Wildlife Federation.