



# MONARCH BUTTERFLY



The Monarch is one of the most iconic species of butterfly in the world.

In Canada, its habitat can range from Alberta to Newfoundland, with most of its breeding grounds found in southern Ontario and southern Quebec.



Unlike most butterflies, the Monarch migrates. Every fall, Monarch butterflies from Canada travel around 4,000 kilometers to Mexico, where they will live for about six months to avoid the cold winters of Canada.



During the caterpillar stage, Monarch butterflies feed exclusively on milkweed plants, while adult Monarchs feed on nectar from a variety of flowers, including milkweeds.

**Milkweed** is not only a staple diet for the Monarchs, it is also where these butterflies lay their eggs, hence making milkweed an essential flowering plant to the life cycle of the Monarch.



In the last 20+ years, the Monarch population has dropped by more than **90%** due to...



Degradation of habitat due to climate change and resource pressures due to human settlements.



Climate change disrupting annual migration patterns and reducing availability of breeding sites and milkweed.



Use of herbicides resulted in decline of milkweed availability, which Monarch butterflies depend on to survive.



Breeding on invasive look-alike species in the milkweed family. Unfortunately, Monarch larvae that hatch on such invasive plants will not survive.

## WHAT IS MONTREAL WEST DOING TO HELP?

The Town is committed to raising awareness about the declining Monarch butterfly population among residents and would like to offer the Monarch colonies a safe and healthy breeding ground.

A Monarch Butterfly Garden has been developed at Roy D. Locke park for this purpose. The garden will be home to native milkweed and other pollinator-friendly plants.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- 1** Add milkweed, native and honey plants in your gardens to offer butterflies a place to lay their eggs and a source of food.
- 2** Place garden in a sunny area, sheltered from strong winds. You can also select native plant or area-adapted species, utilize compost to feed your plants, and avoid using chemical fertilizers.
- 3** Reduce use of herbicides and insecticides whenever possible, which will benefit not only Monarchs, but also other non-pest species of plants, insects and animals.