



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOHN R. KASICH, OHIO GOVERNOR

JERRY WRAY, ODOT DIRECTOR

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DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS

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ODOT asking Ohioans to help with pollinator program

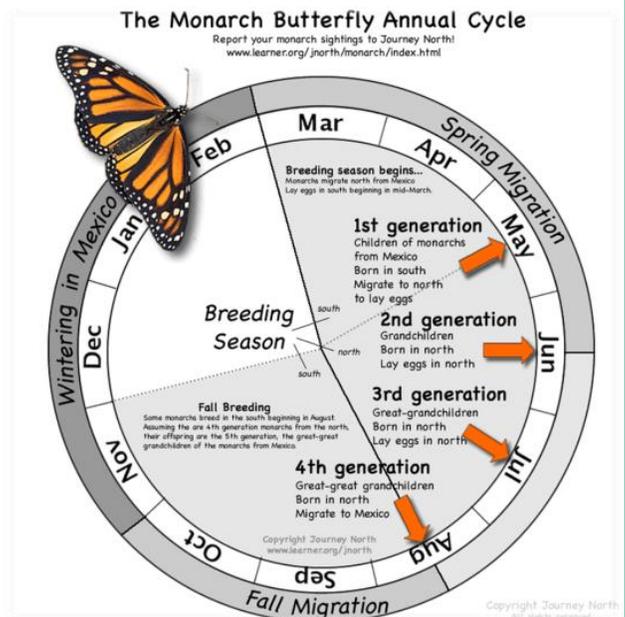
Columbus (Wednesday, August 24, 2016) – With the drastic decline in the population of the monarch butterfly, the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI) is asking the public for their help in creating new habitats by collecting milkweed seed pods from established plants Sept. 1 through Oct. 30 and dropping them off at collection stations around the state. The seeds will be used to establish new plantings for the monarch butterfly throughout Ohio in the coming years.

“Common milkweed is essential to the survival of monarch butterflies in Ohio,” said Marci Lininger, Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “Ohio is a priority area for monarchs. Fourth generation monarch butterflies hatch in Ohio in late summer, migrate north to Canada and then come back through Ohio once more in order to fly to Mexico for the winter. This same generation is also responsible for starting the life cycle all over again in the spring, laying the following year’s first generation of monarchs.”

“Most Ohio counties have a Milkweed Pod Collection Station, most of them being located at local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offices,” said Lori Stevenson, Ohio Private Lands State Coordinator with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

To find the location of your local SWCD office, click [here](#).

To collect the seed pods from the suggested milkweed plants, it is best to pick them when they are dry, gray, or brown in color. If the center seam pops with gentle pressure, they can be picked. It is best to collect pods and store them in paper bags or paper grocery sacks. Avoid using plastic bags because they attract moisture. Store pods in a cool, dry area until you can deliver to the closest Milkweed Pod Collection Station. Harvesting pods from milkweed plants does not have any effect on the population of milkweed in established areas.





When collecting milkweed pods wear appropriate clothing for the outdoors. It is recommended that you wear disposable gloves when picking and handling pods. Always ask permission when collecting pods on anyone's property but your own.

"ODOT is one of the largest landholders in Ohio with more than 19,000 miles of right of way," said ODOT Director Jerry Wray. "Planting milkweed and other native wildflowers on our roadsides benefit pollinators who in

turn benefit agriculture. They also beautify our highways and reduce mowing costs – a double bonus for Ohio taxpayers."

OPHI was formed in response to the 2014 petition to list the Monarch butterfly as federally endangered. Its partners include the Ohio agencies, universities, corporations, and non-profit organizations.

OPHI informs citizens, landowners, farmers, and government agencies of the importance of pollinators and the habitat they need to survive. Members of the initiative provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to all that have an interest in pollinators and protecting our food supply.

For more information or questions concerning pollinators, please contact OPHI at (614) 416-8993 or contact your local SWCD office.

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For more information, contact: Matt Bruning, ODOT Press Secretary, at 614-466-6906, matt.bruning@dot.ohio.gov, or your local ODOT district communications office