



# PRESS RELEASE

## Missourians for Monarchs Releases Hand-Rearing Statement

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:**

Elizabeth Egan  
Communications Coordinator  
epeoples@quailforever.org

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**COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, September 9, 2021** - Monarch butterflies, with their recognizable orange, black and white pattern, are known for their incredible migrations from Mexico all the way to Canada and back. They are a memory of childhood and an image of summer. They appear in Missouri during spring to begin a new generation and return once again during the fall migration as they head to Mexico. Since the 1990's the size of the eastern population has declined more than 80 percent. This decline has drawn individuals to assist monarchs with their cause. Monarchs have become icons for conservation as welcome insect visitors to our gardens and symbolize the role that all people can play in conserving a species.

Monarchs, like many other butterflies, rely on just a few types of plants to rear their young. Monarch caterpillars feed only on milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.) to develop from larvae to chrysalis. Many people have discovered that monarchs are easy to rear at home, at school and other places as long as one has enough milkweed leaves for the caterpillars. Rearing a monarch butterfly enables people of all ages to share in the amazing transformation of a caterpillar into an adult butterfly. This activity can also inspire individuals to become more involved in monarch conservation through education and participation in research.

Missourians for Monarchs understands that rearing small numbers of butterflies can offer benefits for education, outreach, connecting with nature, and community science. However, hand-rearing comes with many risks and should be done on a very limited basis. Missourians for Monarchs recommends individuals who value monarchs and who wish to contribute to monarch conservation should engage in activities proven to benefit monarch populations, such as

1. Plant monarch native habitat. Whether it's 100 acres or 100 square feet, monarchs benefit from the addition of native milkweed and nectar sources.
2. Volunteer on projects for community-science-based habitat monitoring and/or habitat restoration.
3. Support natural habitats with diverse ecological communities where monarch populations can be self-sustaining.

To read Missourians for Monarch's complete statement and learn how you can help monarchs, <https://moformonarchs.org/hand-rearing-monarchs/>

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Missourians for Monarchs is a statewide collaborative of conservation and agricultural organizations, government agencies, utilities, and agribusinesses committed to pollinator conservation. The Collaborative members have committed to creating and maintaining 19,000 acres of pollinator habitat annually for the next 20 years.

