



Butterfly Weed

(*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Butterfly Weed, sometimes called Orange Milkweed, is a hearty perennial that is intensely attractive to butterflies and other beneficial garden insects. It is highly drought resistant, so it's useful for xeriscaping. Unlike other members of the Milkweed family, Butterfly Weed does not issue a milky sap when broken.

Waxy green stems to 70cm (27") tall are topped by vivid orange flower clusters from mid-summer to fall. Grown in small clusters, this plant attracts butterflies like no other, even in urban gardens. Honey bees, wild bees, and hummingbirds are also attracted. Flowers are followed by exotic looking fruits that release easy-to-harvest seeds. Do not confuse this species with *A. syriaca*, which is the primary food plant of the monarch butterfly caterpillar.



How to Grow Asclepias from Seed

Exposure: Full sun

Zone: 3-10

Timing: Sow indoors late February to the end of March and transplant or direct sow towards late April. Optimal soil temperature for germination: 10-25°C (50-75°F). Seeds should sprout in 7-35 days. Asclepias benefits from stratification in which trays are planted and refrigerated for two to three weeks before being placed on bottom heat. This may improve overall germination.

Starting: Barely cover the small seeds using sterilized seed starting mix. Space transplants 30-60cm (12-24") apart.

Note: All parts of the plant are harmful if eaten. Flowers are not edible.