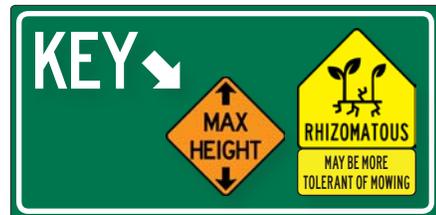




MILKWEEDS OF NEVADA & UTAH

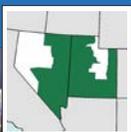


Milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) are herbaceous perennial plants named for their milky sap. These plants occur in a wide range of habitats, including intact natural communities on roadsides and highly disturbed roadsides. As required host plants for monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) caterpillars, milkweeds play an essential role in the butterfly's life cycle (see reverse). Vegetation management that allows milkweeds to persist can support monarchs. This guide can help you recognize the most common native species found on roadsides in your region.



The most common milkweeds in roadsides in Nevada & Utah (in alphabetical order):

Spider milkweed (*A. asperula* ssp. *asperula*)



PLANT: Multiple spreading stems, unbranched to few branches; usually smooth. **LEAVES:** Alternate; lance-shaped; usually folded lengthwise. **HABITAT:** Grasslands, disturbed areas. **SOILS:** Clayey, gravelly, sandy, rocky limestone, dry. **BLOOM:** Apr-Jun; light green with touches of purple.

Desert milkweed (*A. erosa*)



PLANT: Upright, unbranched to branched stout stems; with fine hairs; grows in clumps. **LEAVES:** Opposite; oval- to lance-shaped; smooth to with fine hairs. **HABITAT:** Washes, gulches, canyons, disturbed areas in deserts, creosote bush and sagebrush communities. **SOILS:** Sandy; dry. **BLOOM:** Apr-Oct; yellowish or cream; flower buds are hairy.

Narrowleaf milkweed (*A. fascicularis*)



PLANT: Thin upright branched stems; smooth. **LEAVES:** Opposite to whorled; narrow to lance-shaped; folded lengthwise; mostly smooth. **HABITAT:** Grasslands, wetland-riparian areas, open woodlands, chaparral, sagebrush, disturbed areas, banks of streams and irrigation ditches, fallow fields. **SOILS:** Sandy to clayey, tolerates saline; dry-moist. **BLOOM:** May-Oct; dusky pink to rose with touches of white.

Showy milkweed (*A. speciosa*)



PLANT: Stout upright, unbranched stems; hairy. **LEAVES:** Opposite; oval-shaped; hairy. **HABITAT:** Grasslands, old fields, disturbed areas, edges of rivers, ponds. **SOILS:** Sandy to loamy; dry-moist. **BLOOM:** May-Aug; pink and cream or white; flowers are the largest of American species.

Most common milkweed species *continued*

Horsetail milkweed (*A. subverticillata*)

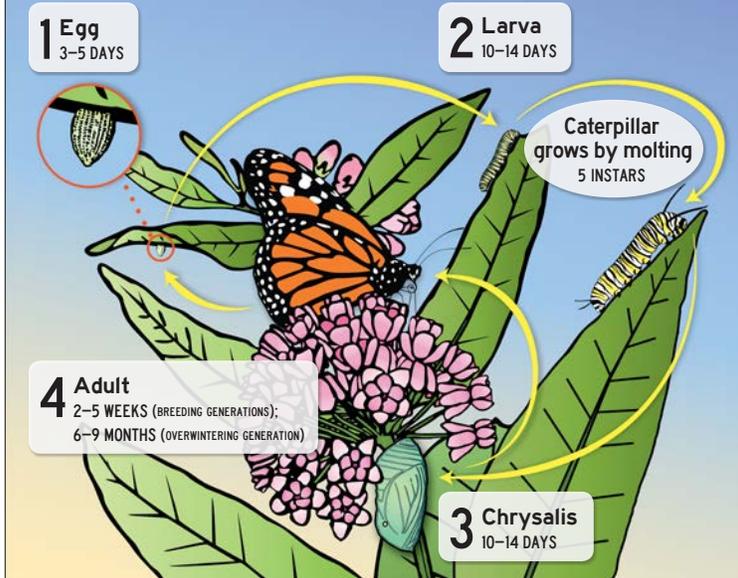


PLANT: Upright, branched or unbranched stems; smooth or with fine hairs. **LEAVES:** Whorled; narrow to needle-like; smooth. **HABITAT:** Ditches, disturbed areas, stream edges. **SOILS:** Sandy; moist. **BLOOM:** May–Aug; yellow to cream or purple.

Additional Resources:

- ⇒ For more information on monarchs and roadsides, including monitoring, visit: tinyurl.com/MJV-Monarchs-Roadsides
- ⇒ Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper: www.monarchmilkweedmapper.org
- ⇒ Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation: xerces.org
- ⇒ Monarch Joint Venture: monarchjointventure.org

THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY LIFE CYCLE

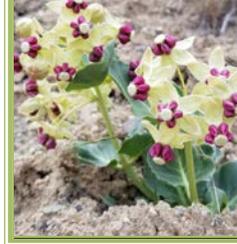


Multiple generations of monarchs are produced over the spring and summer, with the fall generation migrating to overwintering sites. You can monitor monarchs or milkweeds; see Additional Resources above.

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Less common roadside milkweeds:

Pallid milkweed (*A. cryptoceras*)



PLANT: Stout, prostrate, spreading stems, rarely branched; smooth; 1' max. **LEAVES:** Opposite; broad oval- to heart-shaped; waxy, smooth. **SOILS/HABITAT:** Sandy to clayey; dry; washes, hillsides, woodland, sagebrush, salt desert shrubland. **BLOOM:** Apr–Jun; greenish yellow and red or dark violet.

Swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*)



PLANT: One to many upright, branched stems; smooth or with short hairs; 5' max. **LEAVES:** Opposite; lance-shaped or narrow; with few short hairs. **SOILS/HABITAT:** Silty to loamy or clayey; moist-wet; grasslands, ditches, edges of ponds, lakes, streams. **BLOOM:** Jun–Sep; pink, light purple.

Utah milkweed (*A. labriformis*)



PLANT: Multiple upright, usually unbranched, stems; smooth; 1.5' max. **LEAVES:** Opposite; lance-shaped to narrow; with a patch of coarse hairs. **SOILS/HABITAT:** Sandy; dry with moist subsoil; washes, canyons, gulches, disturbed areas, desert shrub. **BLOOM:** May–Aug; pale yellow-green to white.

Broadleaf milkweed (*A. latifolia*)



PLANT: Upright, unbranched, stout stems; woolly when young, smooth with age; 2' max. **LEAVES:** Opposite; oval-shaped; woolly when young, smooth with age. **SOILS/HABITAT:** Sandy, clayey, rocky; dry; grasslands, chaparral, hillside woodlands, canyons. **BLOOM:** May–Aug; white to pale green.

Additional milkweeds in Nevada & Utah: *Asclepias cordifolia*, *A. cutleri*, *A. engelmanniana*, *A. hallii*, *A. involucrata*, *A. macrosperma*, *A. nyctaginifolia*, *A. rusbyi*, *A. ruthiae*, *A. subulata*, *A. syriaca*, *A. tuberosa*, *A. uncialis*, *A. welshii*.

Maps & Distribution Data:

These profiles are derived from regional floras and field guides and Woodson's *The North American Species of Asclepias* (1954). Most common species are abundant across both states and are found in roadsides. Less common species might not occur in both states, have a limited distribution across a state, or may be less common in roadsides. Additional species may be uncommon in roadsides, have a small distribution in a state, or are uncommon or rare. The range maps indicate counties where species have been observed (but may be incomplete), and were created by USDA-NRCS using the latest data from the USDA's PLANTS database (<https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov>).

PHOTO CREDITS: Frankie Coburn / SEINet (*A. labriformis*); Max Licher / SEINet (*A. subverticillata*, *A. latifolia*); Tom Potterfield / flickr (*A. incarnata*); Xerces Society / Stephanie McKnight (*A. erosa*, *A. fascicularis*, *A. speciosa*, *A. cryptoceras*); Andrey Zharkikh / flickr (*A. a. ssp. asperula*). Photographs remain under the copyright of the photographer. © 2019 by The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Xerces® is a trademark registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.