

HELPING MONARCHS AND POLLINATORS:

Rethinking Mowing



The decline of Monarch Butterflies and other pollinators is receiving increasing attention, leading many landowners to wonder how they can help. Rethinking mowing is one way you can make a difference.

Some properties, especially in rural areas, include large areas of lawn. People are accustomed to seeing tidy, evenly mown expanses of green from the roadside. But for Monarchs and other pollinators, these areas are not usable habitat. With a different management approach, these areas can offer a sanctuary for Monarchs that provides breeding and nectaring habitat and improves the chance of recovery for this iconic species.

Pollinators, including Monarchs, require a diversity of flowering plants, including both milkweed and nectar-producing wildflowers. Consider the following ways to increase and improve habitat on your property.

Reduce Mown Areas

Reducing the area of mown lawn can make a difference for insects, including Monarchs. Determine the area that is needed for regular use, such as for children playing or socializing. The remainder of the lawn could simply be allowed to grow or actively planted with wildflower seeds to benefit Monarchs and other pollinators. Allowing a lawn to regenerate to a meadow can, over time, help milkweed and native wildflowers to establish naturally among the grasses. It also helps the area to tolerate drought, resist erosion, reduce runoff and require no fertilizers — and of course, it saves you time to enjoy the summer.



Reduce Frequency of Mowing

Regular mowing promotes grasses; when mowing is reduced, native wildflowers such as milkweed are more able to compete with the grasses. If an area is infrequently used (e.g. for occasional parking or an annual event), it can be less frequently mown. Limit mowing in these areas to once a year or even less, if possible. Some people create pathways by mowing strips through the lawn and leaving other areas to grow taller and produce wildflowers.



*For these resources and more, visit [HelpTheMonarchs.ca](https://www.helpthemonarchs.ca)