

MONARCHS:

Finding Monarchs and Other Backyard Butterflies

Grade Level:

Pre-K - 2

Duration:

20-30 minutes with activity

Objective:

Children will observe color and flight patterns of butterflies. Children will make connections between butterflies and flowers and understand how butterflies play an important part in pollination and supporting a healthy environment.

Key terms:

Migrate, nectar, habitat, antennae, milkweed, host plants

Next Generation**Science Standards:**

K-ESS3-1.
2-LS2-2. and 2-LS4-1.

Introduction:

Monarch butterflies migrate across North America from Mexico to Canada. Every spring through fall, butterflies can be seen throughout Missouri visiting flowers. All butterflies feed on nectar that flowers produce. A flower's color and smell entice a butterfly to come and feed on its sweet, liquid nectar. When butterflies land for a drink, their legs pick up pollen dust. They take this pollen to another flower, and this is how flowers are pollinated and reproduce. Flowers help provide a healthy habitat, which is where animals find everything they need to live. Butterflies taste with their feet and smell with the antennae on their head. Antennae are important for finding food and a mate, and for navigation during migration.

Milkweed plants are host plants for monarchs. Females lay eggs exclusively on milkweed as the caterpillars are very picky eaters and will eat nothing but milkweed leaves! Milkweed gets its name from the white sap it produces. When the caterpillars feed on the plant, they absorb the sap, which makes them taste bad to predators. Once a predator eats one caterpillar, it won't want to eat another. Fall migration through Missouri occurs around the middle of September each year. The bright orange coloring and distinctive markings of the monarch are truly a sight to behold. Visit the Howell Prairie at the Weldon Spring Site to watch this remarkable creature in action.

During this activity, discuss the relationship between monarchs and the plants they feed on. Encourage children to observe different butterflies and explore where they live.

The Weldon Spring Site was granted Monarch Waystation status in 2016 by the Monarch Watch Organization.

Official waystations must contain species of milkweed, the host plant of monarchs. Monarchs are considered an indicator species for a healthy environment.



Monarch butterfly

**MONARCH WAYSTATIONS**

CREATE, CONSERVE, & PROTECT MONARCH HABITATS

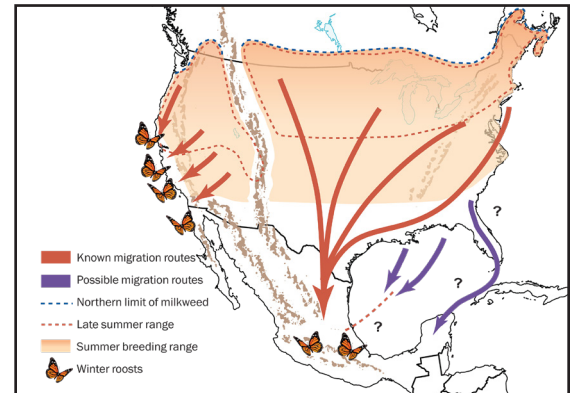
www.MonarchWatch.org



Monarchs roosting on trees



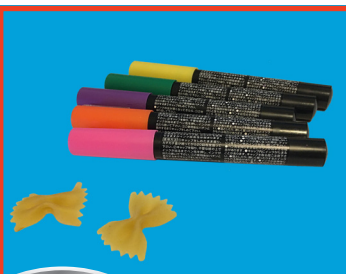
Milkweed



WELDON SPRING SITE
A Legacy of Service

— continued on Page 2 —

Activity: Butterfly Pasta Art



Materials Needed:

- Chalk markers or bright acrylic paint and paint brushes.
- Black marker.
- White paper or card stock.
- Uncooked pasta of various shapes (e.g., bow tie, penne).
- Scissors.
- Glue.



1

Observation and notes

Go outside and look for butterflies in your backyard. Make notes of how many you see, their colors, and sizes. Take additional notes on bushes, trees, and flowers where butterflies land to help you recreate your yard.

Butterflies in my backyard

Butterfly 1: color, size, how many?

Butterfly 2:

Butterfly 3:

2

Recreate your own backyard

For grass, carefully cut bow tie pasta in half and paint them green. Arrange other shaped pasta for trees and flowers. Glue them all to a piece of white card stock paper. Tree trunks and branches work best with penne, rigate, and spaghetti pasta. Use whole and broken bow tie pasta for the leaves. For flowers, try other types of pasta (e.g., elbow macaroni, orzo, spaghetti, shell).



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail





Monarch

3

Butterfly art

Count out bow tie pasta based on how many butterflies you saw. Look at your notes for the color patterns, then start painting your pasta to represent each butterfly. Chalk markers are suggested since they dry quickly.

4

Final touches and detail

Draw details with your marker to match your notes on the different butterflies you saw. Add black antennae and dots behind the butterflies so it looks like they're flying!

Once your pasta art is complete, display it proudly and keep an eye out for more butterflies flying by.

The next time you visit the Weldon Spring Site, watch for butterflies and the flowers they land on. Compare what you see to your artwork and you might see some different kinds to "inspire" another masterpiece.



Buckeye



Red Admiral



WELDON SPRING SITE
A Legacy of Service



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Legacy
Management