

NATIVE MONARCH VALUE ●●●●●

Large-seed Milkweed

Asclepias macrosperma Eastw.

Also called Eastwood's Milkweed

A sprawling Colorado Plateau milkweed of loose sand and dune country, only a few inches high but throwing up to twelve stems from a running rootstock, with crinkle-edged leaves, dense heads of small green and red flowers, and seeds large enough that the name refers to them.

IN FLOWER

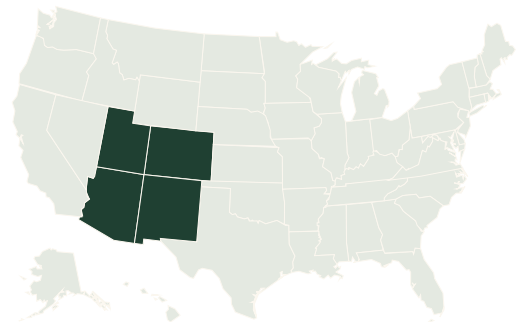


April to June, peaking in May



Patrick Alexander from Las Cruces, NM. CC0. Wikimedia Commons.

RECORDED RANGE



4 states. Generalized to state level.

KEY FACTS

HEIGHT	2in-6in	SPREAD	8in-1.7ft
FLOWERS	green, red, yellow	BLOOM	April to June
LIGHT	Full sun	SOIL	Dry
USDA ZONES	5 to 8	LEAVES	opposite, lanceolate
SAP	Milky latex	ROOTS	Rhizomatous, spreads by root
SEED	30 days cold-moist	RATINGS	Garden 1/5, nectar 2/5, monarch 3/5

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT

- Low and decumbent, 6 to 15 cm, with up to twelve stems from one rootstock, densely covered in short curved hairs.
- Leaves lanceolate to lance-ovate, 2.5 to 7 cm, short-stalked, with distinctly crisped or wavy margins.
- Dense stalkless terminal clusters of 12 to 40 small flowers; green corolla tinged red, especially underneath.
- Hoods uniformly yellow to buff, not cream with a dark stripe down the back. That stripe is what separates dwarf milkweed.
- Seeds 8 to 12 mm, very large for a milkweed, in rough ovoid pods. The name macrosperma means large-seeded.

ECOLOGY AND WILDLIFE VALUE

Confined to the Colorado Plateau, and unlike its close relatives it keeps to loose, often unstabilised sand. Flowering in April to June

makes it available to monarchs moving north early, well before the summer species open.

GROWING IT

Not in cultivation. It needs deep moving sand and will not take garden soil.

CAUTIONS

Of conservation concern in Colorado, where it is known from Montezuma County only, and in New Mexico, where it is known from San Juan County only. Secure in Utah and on Navajo land in Arizona. Do not collect.

WHERE IT GROWS

Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah

MORE PHOTOGRAPHS



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REFERENCES

- Plants of the World Online. <https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:21236-2>
- GBIF. <https://www.gbif.org/species/3170244>
- iNaturalist. <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/148083>
- BONAP county-level map. <https://bonap.net/MapGallery/County/Asclepias%20macrosperma.png>

THE FULL ACCOUNT, WITH MORE PHOTOGRAPHS

<https://milkweedusa.com/species/large-seed-milkweed/>