

NATIVE, RARE OR PROTECTED MONARCH VALUE ●●●●●

Utah Milkweed

Asclepias labriformis M.E.Jones

Also called Labriform Milkweed

A Utah endemic of the Colorado Plateau, found nowhere else on earth, and reckoned to be among the most poisonous plants on western rangeland. Creamy yellow flowers on a knee-high plant growing in dry washes where the subsoil holds water.

IN FLOWER

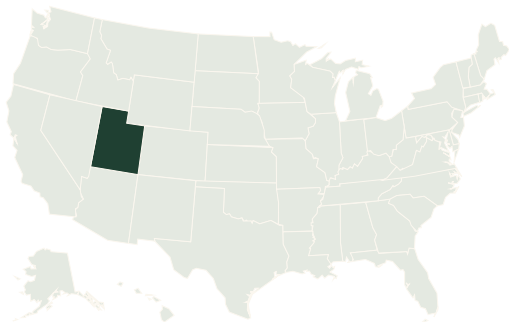


May to August, peaking in June and July



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RECORDED RANGE



1 state. Generalized to state level.

KEY FACTS

HEIGHT	1ft-1.7ft	SPREAD	1ft-1.5ft
FLOWERS	cream, yellow, green	BLOOM	May to August
LIGHT	Full sun	SOIL	Dry
USDA ZONES	5 to 8	LEAVES	opposite, lanceolate
SAP	Milky latex	ROOTS	Deep taproot, resents transplanting
SEED	30 days cold-moist	RATINGS	Garden 1/5, nectar 3/5, monarch 3/5

HOW TO IDENTIFY IT

- Erect stems to about 50 cm, hairy when young and smooth with age.
- Opposite or nearly opposite leaves, leathery, up to 15 cm long and no more than 2 cm wide, with a tuft of hair at the base of the midrib.
- Faintly scented creamy yellow to yellowish-green flowers in gently domed umbels, each flower under 1 cm across.
- Dry sandy washes and sandstone canyon country between about 3,500 and 7,000 feet, from the southern Canyonlands northeast into the Uinta Basin.

ECOLOGY AND WILDLIFE VALUE

A monarch host within its small Utah range, and a nectar source in country where midsummer flowers are scarce. Because the

whole species occupies one corner of one state, its habitat matters out of all proportion to the plant's size.

GROWING IT

Not in the nursery trade and not a garden plant. It is listed here so that it can be recognized and left alone. If you find it, record it rather than collect it: the entire world population is in Utah.

CAUTIONS

Cronquist and co-authors describe this as one of the most poisonous of all western range plants, a reputation few other milkweeds carry. Treat it with real respect around livestock, and do not let it into hay. The usual milkweed advice about irritating sap applies too, but with this species the grazing risk is the serious one.

WHERE IT GROWS

Utah

MORE PHOTOGRAPHS



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- GBIF. <https://www.gbif.org/species/3170345>
- iNaturalist. <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/126673>
- BONAP county-level map. <https://bonap.net/MapGallery/County/Asclepias%20labriformis.png>

THE FULL ACCOUNT, WITH MORE PHOTOGRAPHS

<https://milkweedusa.com/species/utah-milkweed/>