



Dear Butterfly Enthusiast:

Monarch butterflies are the most regal of the wide-spread species. Hence the name. But they are facing a crisis, as you've no doubt heard. Professor Orley Taylor of the University of Kansas, in interviews with the New York Times<sup>1</sup> (October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006) and the Today Show<sup>2</sup> (May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007), predicted a 40-to-60% die-off in the breeding population of Monarch butterflies. Last year's droughts across the Texas and northern Midwest prairies had reduced nectar-bearing flowers by *millions of acres*. This is in addition to the constant reduction of Monarch habitat, estimated at 6,000 acres a *day*.

We at Applied Ecological Services and Taylor Creek Nurseries urge you to plant butterfly-friendly native-plant species, especially *Asclepias* spp. (milkweeds), which are critical to Monarch reproduction. However, there is also a nationwide native-plant seed shortage that compounds the problem.

As they say, "talk is cheap," so we'll do more than just "urge." **For a limited time, we are offering *Asclepias tuberosa* seed (Butterfly milkweed) at 20% off the wholesale price, with *additional discounts for quantity*.** This showy plant has orange flowers that the adult butterflies nectar on, and leaves the larvae feed on. The vibrant color and large quantity of blossoms make it a perennial (pardon the pun) favorite of neophytes and experts alike, often the reason it gets included in gardens when other *Asclepias* are not (good to know if you're a professional). And note that if you've burned your prairie early and often, this favors grasses, and interseeding with additional forbs will add diversity, balance out the species, and attract more pollinators. Finally, we insist on local genotypes, and this seed is local for everyone we've sent this letter to. Please contact Todd Polacek at 608-897-8641 to order or for info.

Beyond *Asclepias tuberosa*, AES has hundreds of butterfly-friendly native species available. But no matter where you get your seed or plants, please plant any and all the butterfly-friendly native species you can, increase their percentage in your mixes, and include them in healthy percentages in your professional and personal projects.

Thank you for your attention and your efforts in Operation Monarch.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Daniels". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Corrine Daniels  
Nursery Manager

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/03/science/03butter.html?ex=1317528000&en=1a4feb95185332f7&ei=5088>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18589782> and <http://allday.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2007/05/15/192117.aspx>