

Butterfly Weed: *Asclepias tuberosa*



Cultivation: The preference is full sun, medium to dry conditions, and a sandy acid soil. This plant will flourish in other kinds of soil if the site is well-drained, including those that are rocky or contain clay. Sometimes the lower leaves will turn yellow, or the taproot will rot, if there is too much moisture in the ground. Also, if the taproot of a young plant is too close to the soil surface, it may not overwinter successfully due to heaving. Otherwise, Butterfly Milkweed is easy to grow, although somewhat slow to develop.

Plant Structure: This is a native perennial plant that is 1½-3' tall. It may develop as a single central stem, particularly when young, or branch outward to form a small bush in appearance. Older plants tiller at the base, with multiple stems emerging from the large taproot. The alternate leaves are medium green or yellowish green, and slightly shiny notwithstanding the presence of tiny hairs. They are linear or broadly linear in shape, about 3" long and ½" wide, with smooth margins. Unlike other milkweeds, this plant has a clear sap, and the level of toxic cardiac glycosides is consistently low (although other toxic compounds may be present).