

District of Ross Mills
Ross Mills Newsletter
August 2019

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Monarch on a Rose Milkweed



There are a lot of monarchs up in the field, Emory has seen them. He said there weren't many last year.

Many were afraid they were going extinct because there weren't many around. This year has been reassuring seeing so many up in the field.

<https://www.almanac.com/news/gardening/gardening-advice/monarch-butterflies-chrysalis-watch>

The following article is from the farmer's almanac at the website above:

For several weeks we have seen monarch butterflies flitting around our gardens—stopping to take advantage of the nectar plants we have growing in abundance. We watched them turn from caterpillars to chrysalises to Monarchs!

They really enjoy the goldenrod, but there are other nectar sources that they like as well, including the zinnias, coneflowers, Joe-Pye weed, liatris, bee balm, asters, phlox, mallows, mints, coreopsis, and rudbeckia.

Of course the buddleia, aptly nicknamed butterfly bush, is their favorite stop.

I am glad that we let stands of milkweed grow around our yard too. The flowers not only have a luscious scent, but they also attract lots of pollinating insects. Since they are the only plant monarch caterpillars feed on, the females lay their eggs here. The newly hatched larvae are ravenous eating machines and tear right into the milkweed leaves. Each female can lay up to 400 eggs!



Here are two tiny hatchlings on a milkweed leaf.

Milkweed is poisonous to most animals and a diet of it makes the monarch caterpillars distasteful to birds and other would-be predators, otherwise they would be readily picked off and eaten. Read more about [milkweed](#).

As they eat and grow they outgrow their skins and shed them several times.

Eventually the caterpillars get ready for their transformation into butterflies.

First they form a silken attachment and hang upside-down from it in a J shape.

Then they form a covering over themselves called a chrysalis. It is quite pretty, a light green with gold dots.

They can be hard to spot since the caterpillars will form them on the underside of a leaf or anything that will hold them.

About 24 hours before the butterflies emerge, the shell of the chrysalis becomes clear enough to see the body of the adult butterfly and sometimes even the color patterns on their wings.



After breaking out of the chrysalis, they plump up their wings and dry them in the sun before flying off to tank up on nectar.

This generation of monarchs will not stay around to breed and lay more eggs. These guys have a long journey ahead of them and nectar is an essential fuel for their flight south. They will stop and refuel along the way, actually gaining weight during their flight south. This helps them survive the winter in semi-dormancy,

high in the mountains of central Mexico.

Usually monarchs live only a few weeks but this migrating generation lives 8 or 9 months, long enough to make it to their wintering sites in Mexico and to head back northward in the spring.

It will take several generations before the monarchs make it all the way back to where I live in New England again but when they do we will be ready with lots for them to eat!

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Matthew William "Billy" Eskeli IV of Falconer, 20, passed away unexpectedly in Ohio resulting from an automobile accident.  
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Ross Mills Grange News

Ross Grange held their annual picnic at Halquist Park in Kennedy. Mary Jane Griffith was in charge of arrangements. She offered a table blessing before those attending shared a buffet of a variety of foods.

Betty Wakefield was recognized for her 25 years of membership. A certificate from National Grange was presented to her. She has been on several committees as well as holding offices, including Master (President.) Currently she is lecturer. County Pomona Grange has been a part of her life and she has participated in State Grange meetings several times.

Debbie Piefer was also recognized as a 25 year member but was unable to attend.

As is the custom of Ross Grange for more than 70 years a display booth at the County Fair will be erected in Floral Hall. The title this year will be "Homeraised Sustainability." Examples and information are shared of homegrown possibilities.

Details of assignments were discussed and arranged. The Chautauqua County Fair will be July 13 - 21 in Dunkirk.

The next meeting will be August 12 at the Falcon's Nest Banquet Hall.

Ross Grange Wins at County Fair

Ross Grange placed first at the Chautauqua County Fair for their display booth in Floral Hall. Their title was "Homeraised Sustainability." Several home based agricultural items were suggested and explained. They placed first for Educational Value and 2nd for Judges' Choice.

Second Place was received by Fredonia Grange for their exhibit on the Hart gas well. They received 2nd place for Educational Value.

Ellery Grange booth with the title of "Early American Sodas." First Place Judges Award was also given to them.

Villanova Grange placed fourth for their display of "Community Service."

The County Pomona Grange exhibit "This Group Called the Grange" was given a blue ribbon. A Junior Grange Display also received a blue.