



STATEWIDE POD COLLECTION 2016



Pollinator Species are experiencing population declines across the United States. In particular, the monarch butterfly has drastically declined here in Ohio and in the wintering grounds of Mexico. In response to this decline the Ohio Division of Wildlife and other partners have created the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI) to educate the public and help create beneficial habitat to pollinators such as the monarch butterfly. OPHI formed after the 2014 petition to list the monarch as federally endangered or threatened. The group's primary focus is to find opportunities and other partners to assist in the efforts to create habitat.

To help foster the creation of habitat for the monarch butterfly, OPHI in cooperation with Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Districts is organizing a **Statewide Milkweed Pod Collection** this year starting **September 1st and ending October 30th**. Milkweed is essential to the survival of Monarch Butterflies in Ohio and Ohio is a priority area for Monarchs. The monarch butterflies that hatch here in the summer migrate to Mexico for the winter and are responsible for starting the life cycle all over again in the spring. During September- October everyone is encouraged to collect Milkweed Pods from established plants and drop them off at the nearest pod collection station. The majority of Ohio Counties have a Milkweed Pod Collection Station most of them being located at the local Soil and Water Conservation District office. You can find the location of your local SWCD office: <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/SWC/SearchLocalSWCD.aspx>

To collect the seed pods from a milkweed plant it is best to pick them when they are dry, gray, or brown in color. If the center seam pops with gentle pressure, they can be picked. It is best to collect pods into paper bags or paper grocery sacks. Avoid using plastic bags because they attract moisture. Store seeds in a cool, dry area until you can deliver to the closest pod collection area. Harvesting pods from milkweed plants does not have any effect on the population of milkweed in established areas.

All milkweed pods collected during this time will be processed by OPHI partners and all of the seed collected will be used to establish new plantings and create additional habitat for the Monarch Butterfly throughout Ohio.

When collecting Milkweed pods wear appropriate clothing for the outdoors. It is recommended that you wear disposable gloves when picking and handling pods. Questions or for more information on pollinators contact OPHI at (614) 416-8993 or your local SWCD office.