

Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnata

At a Glance

Height: 3 to 5 feet tall

Bloom Colors: Fragrant pink to mauve flower clusters

Bloom Time: Mid-summer to early fall

Days to Maturity: Perennial, blooms in second year

Best For: Monarch butterfly habitat, wetland gardens

Growing Conditions Quick Reference

Soil Temperature: 65-75F for best germination

Soil Type: Moist, well-drained soil; tolerates clay

Light Requirements: Full sun to partial shade

Planting Depth: Surface sow or lightly cover

Seeding Rate: Thin to 18-24 inches apart

Moisture Needs: High; prefers consistently moist soil

Average Germination Time: 14-28 days (requires cold stratification)

How to Grow

When to Plant: Sow outdoors in fall or cold-stratify seeds for 30-60 days before spring planting.

Location: Full sun or partial shade in moist soil.

Spacing: Thin seedlings to 18-24 inches apart.

Watering: Keep consistently moist; does well in rain gardens.

Fertilizer: Not needed; thrives in average soil.

Tips for Success

Cold stratification improves germination.

Ideal for rain gardens or moist low areas.

Provides nectar and habitat for Monarch butterflies.

Cut back old stems in late winter for fresh growth.

Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnata

Fun Fact

Swamp Milkweed is a Monarch butterfly favorite and is perfect for wetter areas where other milkweeds won't thrive.

Companion Planting

Pairs well with Joe-Pye weed, New England asters, and sedges for a native pollinator garden.

Harvesting and Use

Leave seed pods for reseeding or collect when they mature and turn brown. Flowers are also fragrant cut blooms.

Quick Planting Checklist

- Sow in fall or cold-stratify seeds
- Thin seedlings to 18-24 inches apart
- Keep soil consistently moist
- Leave seed pods for Monarch habitat