

Monsanto said to offer ‘sustainable solutions’ to arrest decades long monarch butterfly decline

Monarch butterflies are in trouble. These popular insects, which have captured the public imagination with their several-thousand mile migrations, have been steadily disappearing for the past 20 years. Now, Monsanto says it wants to help turn the tide. Can the seed and pesticide giant seen by many as responsible for the monarchs’ decline make a difference for these pollinators? Or will its next batch of genetically engineered (GE) crops make matters worse?

Here’s the back-story: Monarch butterflies have been on the decline for decades, predating the adoption of GE crops. But [recent research](#) has [tied herbicide use on GE crops](#) to the decline.

Every year, most monarchs migrate through the Corn Belt to Mexico, where they stay for the winter. On their way back in the spring, they lay their eggs on milkweed plants. The plant then provides food for the caterpillars once they hatch.

Although the plant is seen as a weed, it doesn’t generally cause significant crop loss. But it turns out that glyphosate herbicides like Roundup, used on most GE crops, are particularly good at killing milkweed.

How does Monsanto, which bills itself as a “[sustainable agriculture company](#),” plan to deal with this possible development?

If monarchs are listed as threatened or endangered, it’s entirely possible that solutions might include actions that could cut into the company’s bottom line, such as restrictions on the use of glyphosate and herbicide-resistant GE crops.

Monsanto’s website [details how it plans to go about](#), “Helping Protect the Monarch Butterfly.”

While this effort is yet to take place, nothing the group has taken on so far suggests that they plan to discuss reducing the use of herbicides on GE crops.

Monsanto’s website says that, after all, milkweed is a problem for farmers. It proposes finding habitat for milkweed outside of crop fields, while continuing to keep their corn and soybeans as devoid of other plant life as possible.

Read full original article: [Will Monsanto Save the Monarch Butterfly?](#)