

## Florida newspaper encourages readers help monarch butterflies by planting milkweed

Once the spectacular black-and-orange monarch was one of the most prolific butterfly species in North America. Its range stretched from Canada to Mexico.

North Florida operates as a resting area for the butterflies before they cross the Gulf of Mexico while South Florida serves as an area for overwintering.

At one time, hundreds could be spotted in a single field fluttering from flower to flower and in their Mexican wintering grounds, acres upon acres of trees were covered with living garlands of the resplendent creatures. Their total population may have once been counted in the billions.

However, in the last two decades, the monarch's population has declined by as much as 90 percent. This decline, many scientists believe, is the result of the poisoning and eradication of their food source and nursery, the milkweed plant. It happened as farmers and homeowners began the use of a herbicidal arsenal to reduce unwanted plants, including the monarch's sole host plant.

The [Fish and Wildlife Service] has partnered with the National Wildlife Federation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to raise the public's awareness of the problem and support the planting of native milkweed. It has allocated \$2 million for monarch conservation in addition to the funding it already provides to protect this country's pollinators.

But the federal government can't resurrect the monarchs alone. The butterflies need everyone's help.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Monarch butterfly's disappearance raises broader concerns](#)**