

SCIENCE QUEST GAZETTE



Volume 7

March

GARDENING WITH KIDS

Getting started:

- Give your child some space; literally! Kids love having spaces that are all their own, whether it's their own desk area in the house, or the tent they've created with chairs and blankets in the family room. The same is true for gardening. Dedicate a small plot of the garden just for them. Put a fancy border around it, perhaps purchase one of the stepping stone making kits found at craft stores in which they can mold their name and make their handprint.
- Let them join you at the nursery. Let your kids know you value their opinion. Ask them which kinds of plants, flowers, and vegetables they like. Explain what will work well in your garden and what won't.
- Give them (limited) choices. While you're at the nursery, ask them if they'd like pansies or petunias, marigolds or zinnias. This will give them the feeling of power without letting it get out of control.
- Remind them money doesn't grow on trees. With older children discuss the budget. Let them help select seeds and blossoming plants at the nursery - and turn it into a math lesson. Let your child do the money calculations; they can tell you when the money runs out.
- Let your child do what he will (especially if you have a preschooler). Let him dig, explore, play with bugs. You may be tempted to steer your child in another direction (like actually watering or weeding his garden), but this is a great way for your child to explore this exciting new universe.
- Plan, plan, plan. If you have older children, say 8 or 9 or older, let them plot out their own garden on paper. Provide him or her with graph paper, pencils and seed catalogs. Give them a group of flowers and vegetables from which to choose, and then let them draw out their garden.
- Get them their own gardening tools. Nothing will motivate your little gardener more than having her own little shovel, her own gardening gloves, and her own watering pail. And don't forget those bright colored rubber boots.

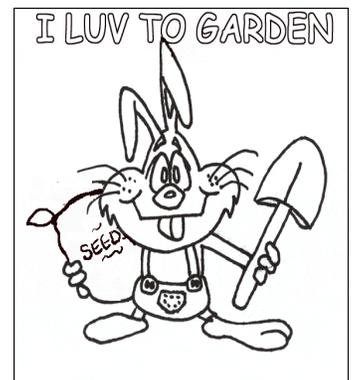
Kids Garden News

<http://www.kidsgardening.com/2006.kids.garden.news/june/pg1.html>

HoustonVegetableGarden.com

<http://www.houstonvegetablegarden.com/>

SCIENCE QUEST
ScienceQuest@comcast.net
281.732.9327





What IS a Monarch Waystation anyway?

A "waystation" may be defined as an intermediate station between principal stations on a line of travel. If we imagine the principal stations for monarchs to be the overwintering sites in Mexico and the points of reproduction in the breeding season, then it becomes easy for us to visualize the value of resource-rich waystations along the monarch's route through its annual fall and spring migrations. Without resources - in the form of nectar from flowers - fall migratory butterflies would be unable to make the journey to Mexico. Similarly, without milkweeds along the entire route north in the spring and summer months, monarchs would not be able to produce the successive generations that culminate in the migration each fall.

Monarch Resources are Declining

Milkweeds and nectar sources are declining due to development and the widespread use of herbicides in croplands, pastures and roadsides. Because 90% of all milkweed/monarch habitats occur within the agricultural landscape, farm practices have the potential to strongly influence monarch populations.

What We Can Do?

To offset the loss of milkweeds and nectar sources due to development, use of herbicides, and roadside management practices, we need to create, conserve, and protect milkweed/monarch habitats. Monarchs need resource patches - lots of them - and our goal over the next three years is the creation of at least 10,000 of these patches, which we are calling "Monarch Waystations". We need you to help us and help monarchs by creating Monarch Waystations in home gardens, schools, parks, zoos, nature centers, field margins, along roadsides, and on other unused plots of land. This effort won't replace the amount of milkweed that has been lost or even keep pace with the habitat losses each year; however, without a major effort to restore milkweeds to as many locations as possible, the monarch population is certain to decline to extremely low levels.

How To Create A Monarch Waystation

http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/seed_kit.html

Texas Monarch Watch

<http://www.texasento.net/dplex.htm>

