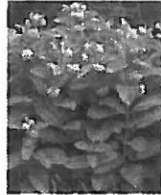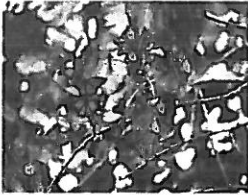# YOU CAN HELP MONARCHS!

Left: Monarch fallout at Whiskey Island
Middle: Common Milkweed
Right: Common Milkweed pod, ready to harvest

Monarch butterflies are one of the most recognized butterflies throughout America. They make an amazing journey each year from Canada to Mexico. In the fall, Monarch's migrate from Canada to Mexico, and then in the spring they migrate from Mexico to Canada.

During these times the Monarch breeds and lays their eggs on milkweed plants. Milkweed is the ONLY plant that Monarch caterpillars will feed on, making milkweed an extremely important plant. Both milkweed and Monarch Butterflies populations are dwindling. With this decline, the Ohio Division of Wildlife and other partners have formed the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI). OPHI has been educating the public and trying to gain more awareness of the milkweed decline.

OPHI and Ohio's Soil & Water Conservation Districts have partnered together in the **Annual Milkweed Pod Collection** going on from September 1, 2016 through October 30, 2016. Here at Cuyahoga SWCD, we will have a collection bin outside the office for Common Milkweed pod drop off. We are located at 6100 West Canal Rd, Valley View, OH 44125. We are in the office from 8:30am to 4:30 pm and the drop off bin is available after-hours.

Pod Collecting Instructions:

When collecting seed pods from a **Common Milkweed** plant it is best to pick when they are dry and gray or brown in color. If the seam pops with gentle pressure they can be picked. It is best to store your picked pods in a paper bag, avoid using plastic bags as they tend to collect and hold moisture. Store your seeds in a dry cool area until you are available to drop them off. **Please mark your bags with the county they were picked in, as well as the date and time.**

Once the pods have been collected, they will be processed by OPHI partners and all of the seeds will be used to establish new milkweed plants and create additional habitats for the Monarch Butterfly here in Ohio.

Written by Megan David
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