



# MLMP Updates

An e-newsletter of the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project



## Fall 2021

***This fall's newsletter includes important monitoring reminders, a volunteer spotlight on two citizen scientists from Colorado, a summary of our 2021 monitoring season data, and a selection of great photos submitted to our gallery this summer. Read on!***

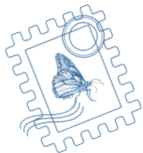
### Important Reminders

#### Rearing Monarchs in California Requires a Permit

The State of California requires a collecting permit for anyone who removes monarchs from the wild. This includes any type of collection such as using them for scientific research or teaching, or collecting them to rear and release. More information on the California permit can be found [here](#). Thus, while California volunteers can monitor monarch eggs and larvae, conducting all parts of Activity 1, it is not legal to collect monarch eggs or larvae for the survival study, Activity 3. We will no longer accept flies from CA sites.

#### Send us your Data Sheets

Please mail either your originals, or copies of your original data sheets, to our main office. We'll use them to "spot check" your data to ensure there are no data entry errors. Mail your data sheets to us at:



Monarch Larva Monitoring Project  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum  
1207 Seminole Highway  
Madison, WI, 53711



### Volunteer Spotlight

#### From Citizen Scientist to Monarch Ambassador: How Caring for Monarchs Became a City-Wide Conservation Effort | *By MLMP Trainer Liz Goehring*

Like most MLMP volunteers, Leslie Gwynn and Kate Stander (pictured right) are passionate monarch advocates. In their hometown of Thornton, Colorado, however, Leslie and Kate have become known to city officials as the "Monarch Ambassadors". Their story illustrates one of the more important outcomes of Citizen Science –i.e., program participation can empower individuals with knowledge and experience, and lead to advocacy and activism. And the best part is that their efforts are starting to pay off for monarchs. Here's their story.

*"Hey, what are you doing with that milkweed?!"* challenged Kate, a long-time monarch enthusiast, as she watched Leslie inspect leaf after leaf of milkweed for signs of monarchs. For several years Kate had been rescuing monarch eggs and larvae from milkweed growing along irrigation ditches destined to be mowed by city maintenance crews. She'd reared, tagged and released many monarchs from these locations, and after...





... two (!) recoveries in Mexico, had come to realize the magic of the habitat along the irrigation ditches. Understandably, she felt protective of these sites. What Kate didn't know was that Leslie was another equally dedicated monarch enthusiast who had been monitoring city milkweed patches as part of the MLMP and was just as passionate and protective of monarchs and their habitat. Within a few minutes of meeting, the two women recognized their common cause and became fast friends.

As the women got to know each other, they realized they had much in common. Kate loved nature, majoring in animal and environmental sciences in college, and shared her passion with her kids, teaching and showing them many marvels of the natural world. She was always out biking the trails of Thornton and knew exactly where to find milkweed and monarchs. Leslie too loved nature, birding and conducting butterfly counts, and recreated nature's beauty in her artwork and gardens. After joining MLMP, Leslie started sharing with the local elementary school, teaching kids about monarchs and art and conservation, and could often be found leading monitoring trips to the local milkweed patches or teaching children to watercolor paint monarchs for their Day of the Dead Celebrations. But both women had also experienced the shock and sadness of seeing their milkweed patches mowed at the worst time, and both had approached their local HOA or city officials without much success.



*Kate Stander with showy milkweed plants (*Asclepias speciosa*)*

As the two women compared notes, they realized that by joining forces, they stood a better chance of taking their fight to city hall. They started with the Parks and Recreation department who was responsible for mowing, requesting a meeting to explain the monarchs' plight and to share mowing best practices based on science. From there they spoke with the City's Water Resources Administrators who had partial jurisdiction over ditches, and then the City's Planning Director. They gained allies along the way, and eventually reached the Mayor's office, requesting her signature on the "Mayor's Monarch Pledge" (<https://www.nwf.org/mayorsmonarchportal>) followed by an official *City Proclamation to Support Monarchs!*

Today, Thornton has launched a city-wide water conservation initiative – *Naturally Thornton* - to convert turf grass in open spaces to water-saving native landscapes. Because of Leslie and Kate's advocacy, the initiative's planners have invited them to join in, helping advise the team on areas of critical monarch habitat. It's a big step in the right direction! Kate and Leslie know it will take continued hard work, beyond what they alone can accomplish, but that's okay – the two have also been busy recruiting other Thornton residents, through city festivals and HOA meetings, giving away monarch flyers and milkweed seed, and slowly but surely growing their team.



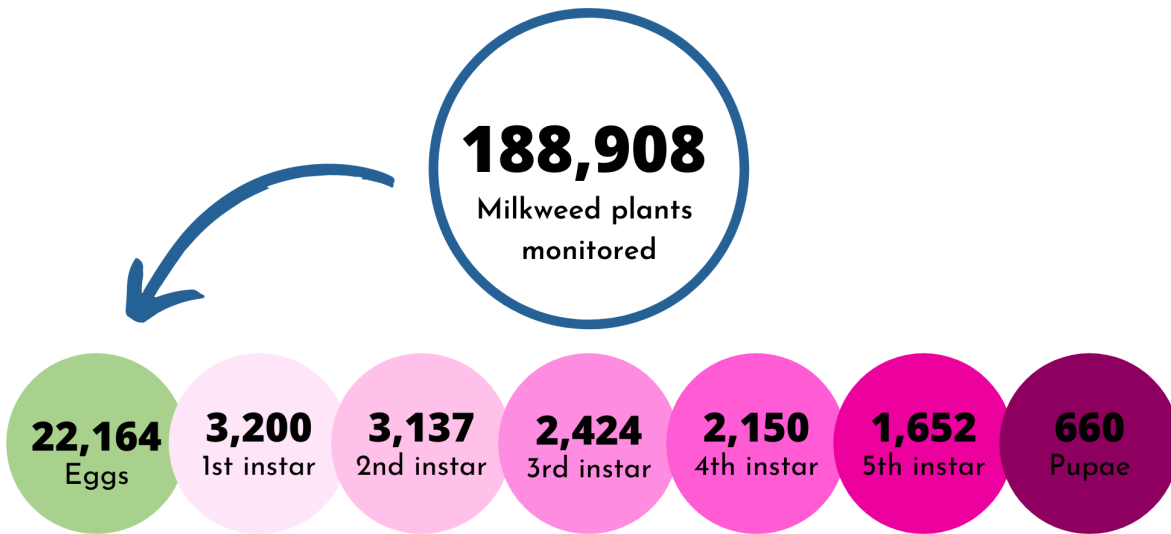
*Leslie Gwynn in her backyard garden*



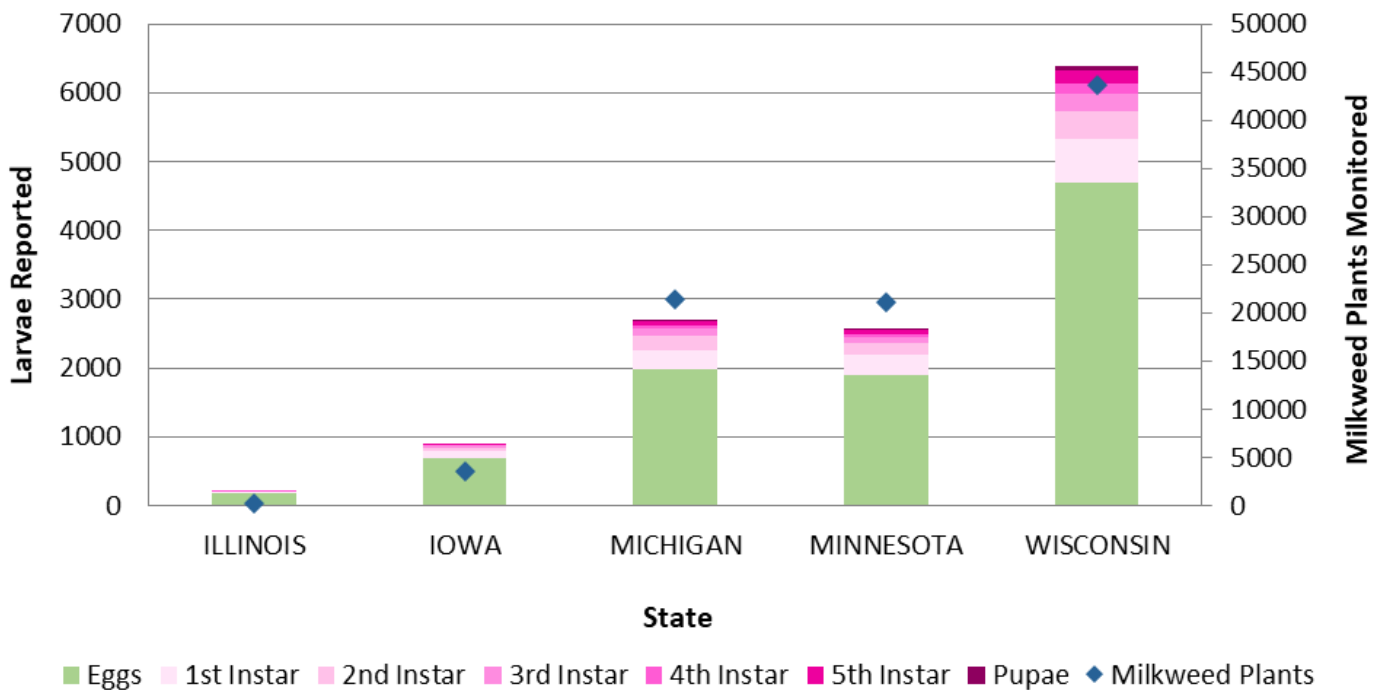
*Leslie teaching students from the STEM Lab in Thornton, CO how to spot eggs and larvae*

## Our 2021 Monitoring Season by the Numbers

We had another fantastic spring and summer of monitoring thanks to your combined efforts; that of over 250 citizen scientists across 278 sites in 3 countries! While some of you monitored milkweed with 10+ eggs and larvae per plant, others had nothing to report. Regardless, all of your data is valuable to our understanding of larval monarch distribution and abundance in North America. We thank you for your time, and hope that you enjoyed the many hours spent in your garden, park, or nearby green space. Read on to see some incredible data from this year, including an overall summary from all sites (directly below), and data collected in the top 5 Midwestern states (Figure 1).



### Larvae Reported and Milkweed Plants Monitored in Top 5 Midwestern States in 2021



**Figure 1.** Of all states, citizen scientists in Wisconsin monitored the most milkweed plants this past season, at a total of 43,701. In second place came Michigan at 21,417, and Minnesota in third at 21,136 plants.



## Photo Gallery

Citizen scientists from across the continent submitted great photos to our MLMP gallery this summer. See a few of our favorites below, and don't forget that you can submit your own under "Gallery" on our website!



**"Pupa on Joe Pye Weed"**  
By Mary Presutti from New York



**"5th Instar on a Mid-Rib"**  
By Denis Lovell from Tennessee



**"An (EX)traordinary Mark on a 5th Instar Monarch Larva"**  
By Derrick C Tabor from Maryland



**"Monarch Larvae on Tropical Milkweed at Home Butterfly Garden"**  
By Geri Freitas from California



This "X" marking is uncommon in monarchs, and could result from an injury in a previous instar, or difficulty during the molting process. This usually does not affect the adult monarch.

### ***You can support MLMP in many ways!***

Please consider supporting our collective conservation efforts with a donation that supports training, materials, and maintenance of the data you collect. You can make a financial contribution today [here](#).

Have a story from your site or art to share? We'd love to hear from you!

**info@mlmp.org | www.mlmp.org**

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