



## 2022 Milkweed Seed Collection

Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (Richland SWCD) is partnering again with the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI) to collect common milkweed seed pods to help foster habitats for Monarch butterflies. If you wish to help with this project, drop off collected milkweed seed pods October 1 until November 15 in the container located outside the Richland SWCD office at 1495 W. Longview Avenue, Mansfield.

Here are a few things to remember when collecting Milkweed Seed Pods:

- Become familiar with common milkweed to avoid harvesting pods from similar plants such as hemp dogbane and swamp milkweed.
- It is best to pick the pods when they are dry, grey or brown.
- If the center seam of the pod pops with gentle pressure, they can be picked.
- Don't collect pods that are already open, as they might be infested with insects.
- Place collected pods in paper bags or paper grocery sacks. Plastic bags collect unwanted moisture.
- On the bag, please write the date you collected the pods and the county you collected them from.
- Keep the pods in a cool, dry area until you can deliver them to the Richland SWCD office.
- Only collect from your property or property you have been given permission to go on; do not trespass.

Milkweed is the only host plant for the Monarch butterfly for egg laying and caterpillar rearing. It also serves as a food source for Monarchs as well as many other pollinator species. The disappearance of milkweed across the U.S. has contributed to the 80 percent decline of the eastern monarch butterfly population over the last 20 years. (Source: Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative)

Since the project's inception, Richland County and hundreds of Ohioans have worked together to collect approximately 5,000 gallons of common milkweed seed pods, totaling over 22 million seeds!

During the winter, seeds from this year's milkweed seed pod collection will be removed from the pods and returned to the Richland SWCD office in the spring to be distributed for planting. Richland SWCD gave away over 100 milkweed seed packets with planting instructions this year.

For more information about collecting milkweed seed pods or other Richland SWCD programs, call 419-747-8685 or go to <https://richlandswcd.net/>

