

Cape Royal Preserve Helps the Monarch Butterflies

The Monarch butterfly migration occurs twice every year, and Florida is part of the Canada to Mexico migration route. Nectar from flowers provides the fuel Monarchs need to fly. If there are no blooming plants to provide nectar for the Monarchs, they won't have the energy needed to travel. The Monarch butterfly population is declining, so creating more habitats for them helps to reverse this decline.

Monarchs' favorite plant for laying eggs is the Milkweed, which we have in Florida. These plants attract the butterflies with their showy flowers, and the Monarchs then lay their eggs on the leaves. The resulting caterpillars feed off the leaves to eventually become more Monarch butterflies!



This year, The Preserve Committee (a.k.a. "Swamp-Rats") planted 9 Milkweed plants, made available through a resident donation. Three of them are readily visible to the north of Reflection Lake, quite close to the road. Milkweed is a perennial plant which self-sows and grows 3' - 4' high. This plant, expected to grow well in that location, is drought-tolerant and will continue to grow new leaves throughout our seasons, attracting many different types of butterflies. As this is the first time we have added these to our conservation area, this experiment will provide us with a chance to observe these over time. As they are a new addition, we don't yet have a plant sign for them, but will add that in the near future. Stop by to take a look.

New Identification Signs in Preserve Help Educate

What ARE Those Plants?

Do you know what these plants look like?
(match the plant with the picture)

- ⇒ Wild Coffee
- ⇒ Dune Sunflower
- ⇒ Giant Leather Fern
- ⇒ Coontie
- ⇒ Muhly Grass
- ⇒ Lignum Vitae
- ⇒ Dwarf Saw Palmetto
- ⇒ Saltbush



Have you seen these plants near Reflection Lake? Florida boasts a very different flora from many other parts of the U.S., so sometimes it's difficult to identify some of the plants. The Preserve Committee has provided identification signs for several of the native plants around the Reflection Lake area. 13 plants have been identified to date, with the 8 above located in the area to the right of the lake along Royal Tee Circle. Take the quiz, and then stop by to see if you identified them correctly by reading the signs!

Don't Miss This New Plant

This native red flowering shrub was spotted in a marshy area on a kayaking trip a couple of years ago. Once identified as a "Swamp Hibiscus," a donation was made to the Preserve. They only thrive in very wet areas, so if they survive, more may be added over time.



Swamp Hibiscus

