

BUTTERFLY MILKWEED

ASCLEPIAS TUBEROSA

Butterfly Milkweed is known for its bright orange clumps of flowers designed to attract pollinators. This showy plant is popular in home landscaping. It is also known as butterfly weed because it does not have the thick sap typical of other milkweeds.

Milkweeds need larger flying pollinators because of the design of their pollinating mechanism. Pollen sacs are found in a slit in the flowers where the feet of pollinators get trapped while they feed. When the pollinator tries to fly away they must be strong enough to pull themselves out of the slit, carrying the pollen sacs with them. Many smaller pollinators are too weak and will die trapped in the grasp of the plant. This results in only a few of the many flowers becoming pollinated.



The roots were once chewed as a cure for Pleurisy (inflammation of tissues that line the lungs and chest cavity) giving it the common name, Pleurisy Root.

Photos: Cecilia Hagen