

Creating a seed source of native milkweeds for restoration of critical Monarch habitat

Success: We established a mass milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.) garden at the USFS Clarno Hardwoods facility for production of large quantities of source-identified, locally adapted seed for restoration and enhancement of milkweed populations in Central Oregon to improve critical Monarch habitat.



USFS Clarno Hardwoods Facility on the John Day River in Oregon. Photo Credit: Chris Jensen

Purpose: Current surveys indicate milkweed populations across Central Oregon are small, fragmented and narrowly scattered with very limited quantities of natural seed available. This seed production garden will produce the large quantities of seed needed for habitat improvement projects.

Composition: For two species of milkweed (*speciosa* and *fascicularis*) seed from 18 carefully chosen separate populations were combined into a single, randomized garden to promote crossing of genotypes and creation of genetically diverse seed.

Multiple benefits: The Clarno Hardwood facility is situated on the John Day river corridor, a known Monarch migration route populated with native milkweeds between over-wintering sites in northern California and breeding sites in eastern Washington. As such, this milkweed installation will not only serve as a seed source for restoration but also breeding habitat and a waystation

for migrating Monarchs, and habitat for other pollinators. Moreover, we are exploring ways in which we can partner to share this material with additional stakeholders.

Partners: USFS Region 6 Native Plant Program; Kas Dumroese USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station; Tom Landis, Native Plant Nursery Consulting; Prineville District BLM; Region 6 USFS Bend Seed Extractory; Clearwater Native Plant Nursery.

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Native *Asclepias speciosa* on the John Day River near Clarno, OR. Photo Credit: Matt Horning



