

Red Milkweed *Asclepias rubra* (ass-KLE-pee-us ROO-bruh)



Photo by and grown by John Brandauer

Description: Elusive, very rarely found commercially, imperiled in the wild, easy to grow, with proper conditions. One of the more attractive milkweeds, to bipeds and wildlife, and a well-behaved clumping habit make this a prime choice in your wetland.

Common Name: Red Milkweed, Red Silkweed, Tall Pink Bog Milkweed

Type: Forb/herb **Family:** Asclepiadaceae **Life Cycle:** Perennial

Soil Preference: Wet, humus rich soil, will withstand seasonal flooding.

Light Requirements: Full Sun preferred, may take part sun.

Care: Keep it watered, may not tolerate root disturbance.

Blooms: Showy blossoms in June-July. Color is variable, lavender to pink, rose to dull red.
(Blooms on any one plant will be the same)

Size: Two to three feet tall, about a foot wide

Growth Rate: Slow, clumping roots

Native habitat: Wet meadows, bogs, swamps, marshes and along streams. Native from NY down the east coast, to Texas, but uncommon to rare throughout its range. **Endangered in New Jersey** and Maryland, extirpated in Pennsylvania.

Wildlife Benefits: A monarch host plant and a nectar source for bees and butterflies, a favorite here. There were bees still on it, as I held the potted plant upside down, gently tapping to free it for planting. There is nearly always something nectaring on it!

Propagation Methods: Dormant root division or seed. Collect pods in late August, early September. Stratify seeds at 40°F for one month minimum, surface sow in spring.

Information compiled from the web, supplemented by our experiences.

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