

Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnata

(ass-KLE-pee-us in-kar-NAH-tuh)



Left: in bloom

Below: Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) caterpillar on Swamp Milkweed cropped

Right: Aphids, Swamp Milkweed, Ladybug



Photo by and grown by John Brandauer

Description: This is the BEST choice, for growing milkweed in a garden setting. Ample foliage for caterpillars, surprisingly drought tolerant. A New Jersey native, that has a well behaved clumping habit (unlike common milkweed).

Other Names: Rose Milkweed, Red Milkweed, Swamp Silkweed, White Indian Hemp, Pink swamp milkweed, that wonderful, underutilized attractive, beneficial milkweed

Type: Forb/herb

Family: Asclepiadaceae

Life Cycle: Perennial

NJ Native Status: Yes, VERY widespread, throughout the US **Light Requirements:** Full sun preferred

Soil Preference: Prefers wet soil, tolerates normal garden conditions, even clay quite well.

Care: Easy, taproot may resist moving a mature plant. Aphids may be hosed off, if they offend you. Deer resistant, for those of us that share our outdoor space!

Growth Rate: Moderate, slow to awaken in spring.

Blooms: Pinkish, vanilla fragranced, showy blooms in summer, white on some cultivars. The Latin name for the species *incarnata* refers to the flesh colored blooms. July to September.

Size: Three to four feet tall, about a foot and a half wide wide, bigger if happier.

Natural habitat: Edges of ponds and moist soils, wet meadows, shallow waters. Banks and flood plains of lakes, ponds, and marshes. Ditch edges, dikes, swamps, wet prairies, and poorly drained areas.

Wildlife Benefits: A monarch host plant and a nectar source for bees and butterflies. Attract hummingbirds. Baltimore Orioles may use the fibers from the stems in weaving their nest. Aphids will appear, then Ladybugs, no worries relax and enjoy the show! **GROW THIS PLANT!**

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.

Commercial availability: Readily available, including named cultivars.

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Information compiled from the web, supplemented by our experiences.