

Asclepias incarnata



Asclepias (a-sklay-pee-as) From the Greek name in honor of the god of healing and medicine 'Asklepios'.

incarnata (in-kar-nah-ta) from the Latin, in, "in", carn, "flesh", -atus, "like, resembling"; hence "flesh colored", a reference to the pale rose color of the flower.



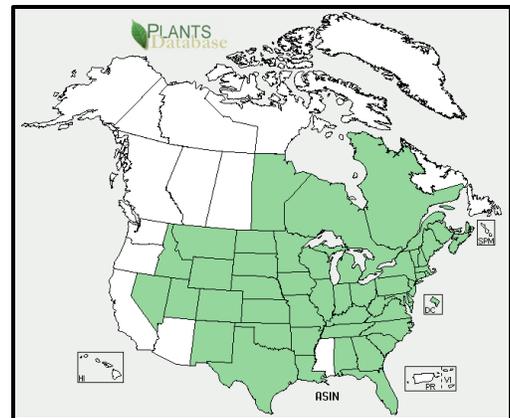
Zones: 3 - 9 **Flower Color:** Rose Pink **Height:** 3 - 4' **Spacing:** 24"

About the Species:

Common Name: Swamp Milkweed **Family:** Asclepiadaceae

Asclepias incarnata has a narrow upright form with flat-topped clusters of rose pink blossoms that will grow to 3-4 feet high and start blooming in July and last through September. The flowers have a faint vanilla scent and make lovely cut flowers; however, the milky sap in the stems may be somewhat messy. The narrow seed pods are about 3" long and hang on a short stem. The seeds have tufted silky hairs which are spread by the wind.

USDA Plants Database



Habitat: These plants are found growing at the edges of ponds, wet meadows, shallow waters, ditch edges, dikes, and poorly drained spots throughout North America.

In the Garden: Easy to grow in medium wet to wet soils in full sun, Swamp Milkweed will also tolerate well-drained soils. Also well suited for the butterfly and hummingbird gardens, bog gardens, mixed borders and native plant beds.

Other Uses: Swamp Milkweed, or pleurisy root as it is also named, served as an internal and external remedy for many ailments amongst Native American tribes. It also provided food for Native American tribes in the form of a crude sugar from the flowers, as well as a sugary syrup. The young seed pods were boiled and eaten with buffalo meat and the flower heads were used in soup, and added to cornmeal mush. Unopened flower buds were also cooked, tasting somewhat like peas, and young shoots eaten as an asparagus substitute. As with any plant, research first to be sure that it can be eaten safely.

The bark and the seed floss of *Asclepias incarnata* were used by the Chippewa Tribe as a source of fiber. When harvested in late autumn, after the plants have died down, the bark can be pulled apart to make a good quality fiber to make twine, cloth, etc. The seed floss can be used to stuff pillows or can be mixed with other fibers to make a cloth.



Asclepias tuberosa



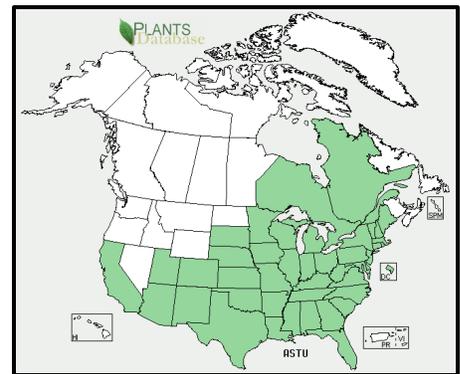
Asclepias (a-sklay-pee-as) From the Greek name in honor of the god of healing and medicine 'Asklepios'. *tuberosa* (tew-be-row-sa) meaning "tuberous".



Zones: 3 - 9 **Flower Color:** Orange **Height:** 12-24" **Spacing:** 18"

About the Species:

Common Name: Butterfly Weed
Family: Asclepiadaceae



USDA Plants Database

The vibrant orange flowers of *Asclepias tuberosa* will bloom June through August followed by green 4 – 5" seed pods. It grows to 1-2' high and tends to emerge from the ground in the late spring. It is a clump forming medium-sized plant that gets bushier as it grows older. Re-blooming may occur if the flowers are cut. Flowers that remain on the plant will develop into interesting seed heads that should be removed before splitting, as they can be somewhat messy.



Habitat: Butterfly Weed is found growing in open areas, prairies, along old country roads, abandoned roads, and abandoned railroad right-of-ways in Eastern North America.

In the Garden: Butterfly Weed prefers average, dry to medium wet, well-drained soils in full sun. Its large taproot will make *A. tuberosa* difficult to relocate but serves it well for drought resistance. The intense orange color is a magnet for butterflies. Milkweeds are used by the Monarch butterfly as caterpillar food; however, the sap which deters other animals from enjoying *A. incarnata* is almost non-existent in *A. tuberosa*. It is attractive planted in mixed borders, meadows, butterfly gardens, and naturalized areas.

The Bright and the Beautiful.

The intense orange color of *Asclepias tuberosa* flowers makes quite a statement in the landscape. A staple in the butterfly garden, this milkweed was also an important plant to the Native Americans. Pioneers who became friendly with the Native Americans quickly learned to use these easy to obtain plants for their own health reasons.

Other Uses: Butterfly Weed will make a lovely cut flower for bouquets with a little bit of preparation: immediately place flowers in warm water following cutting and then refrigerate for 12 hours before using in an arrangement. *Asclepias tuberosa* is considered a perennial herb and also has many uses in medicinal and culinary recipes and as a fibrous material. Pioneers and Native Americans used boiled Butterfly Weed roots to treat diarrhea, asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Some Native American legends tell of the roots being used as a body wash to provide strength in lifting and running. During WWII, the sap of the milkweed family plants was used experimentally to provide a rubber substitute. The down from milkweed seeds was spun to make candlewicks and the floss has been used to mop up oil spills at sea.