

PRESIDIO TO BAY

SPECIES: MONARCH



ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

- » The Presidio, access through the Lombard Gate, Fort Mason, Russian Hill Open Space, Telegraph Hill, Filbert Steps, Coit Tower



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

MONARCH – *Danaus Plexippus*

All hail the kings!

These regal butterflies fly into San Francisco beginning in the late summer and early fall when they are migrating southward. They seek out tall groves of trees, where they cluster together and spend the winter months in near dormancy. There is a historic Monarch overwintering roost at Fort Mason, in a eucalyptus grove near the community garden. During the rest of the year, this butterfly migrates into the Central Valley and northward to breed and lay eggs on milkweed, their larval food plant. This movement spans a summer, and four generations later, the butterflies return to the same trees onto which their descendants imprinted the previous winter. The Xerces Society has been compiling data on this phenomenon for the past 40 or so years.

RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY

Migratory

KEY HABITAT FEATURES

Fields, meadows, prairie remnants, urban and suburban parks, gardens, trees, and roadsides. Monarchs overwinter in eucalyptus and conifer groves.

DIET

Caterpillars feed on milkweed (mostly inland California), adults take nectar from a variety of flowers, including milkweed flowers, red clover, and goldenrod.

ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

California Goldenrod – *Solidago spathulata*
California Thistle – *Cirsium occidentale* var. *californicum*
Wild Aster – *Symphotrichum chilense*
Narrowleaf Milkweed – *Asclepias fascicularis*

NESTING INFORMATION

Eggs are laid by the females during spring and summer breeding months onto the leaves of milkweed plants, which caterpillars feed on after hatching.

ADDITIONAL HABITAT PLANTS

"The larval food plants used by the monarch caterpillar include: *Asclepias* sp., *Calotropis procera* – apple of Sodom, *Cynanchum laeva* – sand vine, *Sarcostemma clausa* – white vine
Adult nectar flowers: *Buddleja davidii*. Butterfly Bush. *Carduus pycnocephalus*. Italian Thistle. *Cirsium vulgare*. Bull Thistle. *Cynara cardunculus*. Cardoon. *Daucus carota*. Carrot. *Dipsacus fullonum*. Wild Teasel. *Echium candicans*. Pride of Madiera. *Eucalyptus globulus*. Blue Gum. *Hedera helix*. English Ivy. *Marrubium vulgare*. Horehound. *Medicago sativa*. Alfalfa. *Melilotus alba*. White Sweetclover. *Pastinacea sativa*. Wild Parsnip. *Persicaria pennsylvanicum*. Pinkweed. *Raphanus sativus*. Radish. *Robinia pseudoacacia*. Black Locust. *Silybum marianum*. Milk Thistle. *Taraxacum officinale*. Dandelion. *Trifolium pratense*. Red Clover. *Trifolium repens*. White Clover. *Verbena bonariense*. Brazilian Verbena."