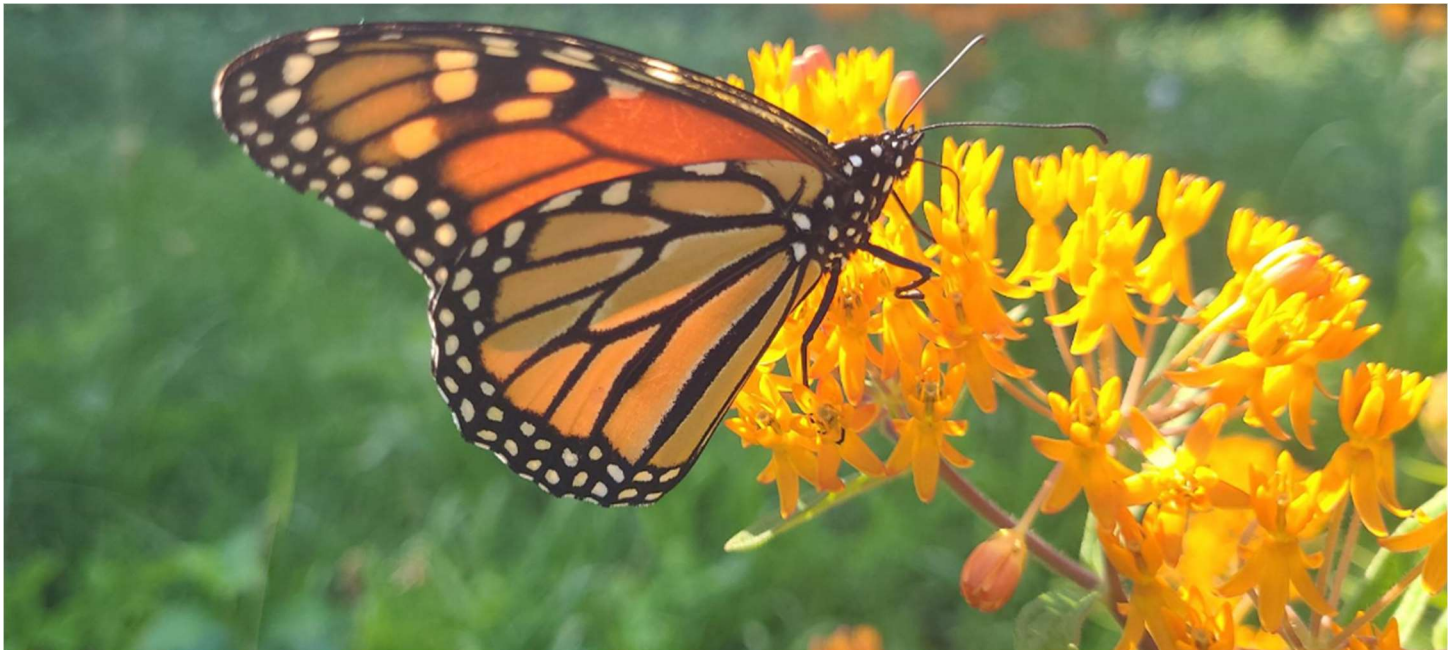




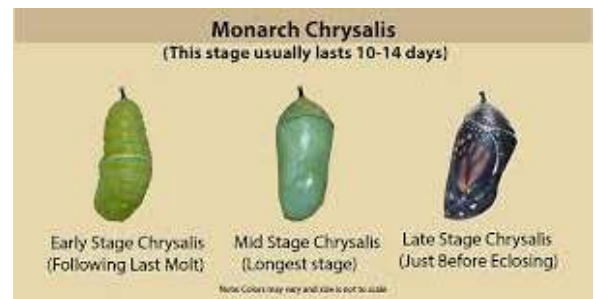
CTDOT's Reduced Mowing Program benefits all pollinators – most notably the Monarch butterfly



Here in New England, peak monarch migration occurs the first two weeks of September. During the summer and early fall (the breeding season) monarchs typically cycle through four generations with the last generation migrating to Mexico. The last generation of monarchs are born in the northern United States and Southern Canada in late summer, and in early fall they migrate three thousand miles south to Mexico by rising on columns of warm air called thermals to altitudes of twelve thousand feet, gliding down until they catch the next thermal. The monarchs arrive in Mexico in early November and stay in the cool forests there until about March.

In spring the females mate with the males, the males die, and the females fly north as far as they can go before it is their time to lay their eggs on milkweed plants and die. Generally, these butterflies have about three weeks to live once they leave Mexico and make it to southern Texas. The caterpillars of the adults grow and emerge as butterflies and have about three to four weeks to live, spreading north, and laying their eggs before they, too, die. This continues until the last brood of the summer returns to Mexico, four or five generations removed from the ones that spent the previous winter there. One of the most remarkable things about the migration of the monarch butterfly is that the butterflies that fly to Mexico have never been there before.

The reduced mowing and Conservation Areas implemented by Highway Operations has had a substantial impact on available milkweed (the monarchs only food source) along our roads. The presence of milkweed does not guarantee an increase in the monarch population but creating / reestablishing pollinator habitat is something that greatly benefits not just monarchs but all pollinators. Life Cycle: Adult / Eggs / Larvae / Chrysalis / Adult---repeat.



Monarch larvae on a milkweed plant.



CTDOT Conservation Area.

