

# Pollinator Posse

## Healthy Rearing Recommendations for Monarchs

We understand the pleasure of watching the life cycle of the Monarch Butterfly and the desire to foster and protect them during their vulnerable stages. If you are interested in helping save the Monarch as a species, your energy would be best spent working to increase milkweed and nectar plant habitat and eliminate pesticide and herbicide use in your community and beyond. Rearing caterpillars in protected settings is not the best strategy to preserve the species or the migration. If you do choose to rear some caterpillars for educational or personal pleasure, we offer the following recommendations and explanations to support healthy outcomes.

- Rear only for educational or personal experience purposes
- Rear only local eggs or caterpillars and release adults in the same place
- Limit numbers to less than 100 per year per site
- Limit numbers to 10 caterpillars in a single enclosure
- Limit numbers to those you can provide adequate food for throughout the life cycle
- Quickly isolate any diseased or questionable individuals
- Keep caterpillars and chrysalides outdoors in natural conditions of light and temperature
- Start each group with new enclosures and/or disinfect enclosures previously used (20% bleach)
- Follow disinfection protocol for eggs and collected milkweed
- Feed caterpillars native milkweed if at all possible
- Test butterflies for OE infection and euthanize Monarchs who are heavily infested.
- Contribute to citizen science reporting for any reared or observed Monarchs
- Keep adult Monarchs protected for 24-48 hours before releasing into the wild.

Note: Under California state statute it is illegal to rear Monarchs unless you are doing so under a permitted research program – The Posse is currently investigating becoming part of such a program