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# *Asclepias tuberosa*

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Species Native to Missouri

Common Name: butterfly weed 

Type: Herbaceous perennial

Family: Apocynaceae

Native Range: Eastern and southern United States

Zone: 3 to 9

Height: 1.00 to 2.50 feet

Spread: 1.00 to 1.50 feet

Bloom Time: June to August

Bloom Description: Yellow/orange

Sun: Full sun

Water: Dry to medium

Maintenance: Low

Suggested Use: Naturalize, Rain Garden

Flower: Showy

Attracts: Butterflies

Tolerate: Deer, Drought, Erosion, Dry Soil, Shallow-Rocky Soil

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## Culture

Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Drought tolerant. Does well in poor, dry soils. New growth tends to emerge late in the spring. Plants are easily grown from seed, but are somewhat slow to establish and may take 2-3 years to produce flowers. Mature plants may freely self-seed in the landscape if seed pods are not removed prior to splitting open. Butterfly weed does not transplant well due to its deep taproot, and is probably best left undisturbed once established.

## Noteworthy Characteristics

*Asclepias tuberosa*, commonly called butterfly weed, is a tuberous rooted, Missouri native perennial which occurs in dry/rocky open woods, glades, prairies, fields and roadsides throughout the State (Steyermark). It typically grows in a clump to 1-3' tall and features clusters (umbels) of bright orange to yellow-orange flowers atop upright to reclining, hairy stems with narrow, lance-shaped leaves. Unlike many of the other milkweeds, this species does not have milky-sapped stems. Flowers give way to prominent, spindle-shaped seed pods (3-6" long) which split open when ripe releasing numerous silky-tailed seeds for dispersal by the wind. Seed pods are valued in dried flower arrangements. Long bloom period from late spring throughout the summer. Flowers are a nectar source for many butterflies and leaves are a food source for monarch butterfly larvae (caterpillars). Also commonly called pleurisy root in reference to a prior medicinal use of the plant roots to treat lung inflammations.

Genus name honors the Greek god Asklepios the god of medicine.

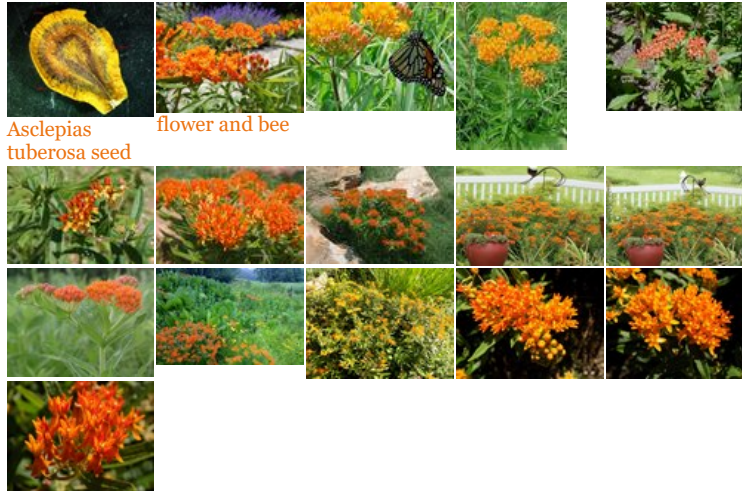
Specific epithet means tuberous in reference to the roots.

## Problems

No serious insect or disease problems. Crown rot can be a problem in wet, poorly drained soils. Susceptible to rust and leaf spot.

### Garden Uses

Butterfly gardens, meadows, prairies, or naturalized/native plant areas. Also effective in sunny borders or slopes. Whether massing plants in large drifts or sprinkling them throughout a prairie or meadow, butterfly weed is one of our showiest native wildflowers.



Asclepias tuberosa seed flower and bee

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