

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
BIG FLATS, NEW YORK

AND

ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE COMMISSION  
ALBANY, NEW YORK

AND

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY  
EASTERN NEW YORK CHAPTER  
TROY, NEW YORK

AND

NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION  
ALBANY, NEW YORK

The Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, announce the release of a source-identified ecotype of Butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa* L.).

As a source identified release, this plant will be referred to as Glacial Lake Albany Germplasm butterfly milkweed, to document its original location. It has been assigned the NRCS accession number, 9051776.

This alternative release procedure is justified because there is an immediate need for a source of local ecotype of butterfly milkweed. Plant material of this specific ecotype is needed for ecosystem and endangered species habitat restoration in the Pine Barrens of Glacial Lake Albany. The inland pitch pine – scrub oak barrens of Glacial Lake Albany are a globally rare ecosystem and provide habitat for 20 rare species, including the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*). The potential for immediate use is high and the commercial potential beyond Glacial Lake Albany is probably high.

Collection Site Information: Stands are located within Glacial Lake Albany, from Albany, New York to Glens Falls, New York, and generally within the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, just west of Albany, New York. The elevation within the Pine Barrens is approximately 300 feet, containing a savanna-like ecosystem with sandy soils wind-swept into dunes, following the last glacial period. Soils are classified as Colonie loamy fine sand, with a mean annual precipitation of 36.17 inches per year. This is plant hardiness zone 5. Very little variability was observed in stands of butterfly milkweed,

therefore, any collection of butterfly milkweed within Glacial Lake Albany would be considered a constituent of this source-identified release.

**Ecotype Description:** Butterfly milkweed is a long-lived perennial forb in the milkweed family with showy orange flowers blooming in late spring to September. This plant has three inch long seedpods with little white puffs of down attached to each seed. Butterfly milkweed has a large taproot and grows well on dry, well drained, infertile soil.

**Environment Impact Assessment:** Glacial Lake Albany Germplasm butterfly milkweed is a collection of a naturally occurring germplasm and has not been purposefully altered. An assessment of this native plant concludes that it is not invasive, nor does it have any potential to become invasive.

**Anticipated Conservation Uses:** The potential use of Glacial Lake Albany Germplasm butterfly milkweed is for endangered species habitat restoration and general improvement of the pitch pine-scrub oak barrens of Glacial Lake Albany. The genus *Asclepias* is the sole food plant of monarch butterfly larvae. *Asclepias tuberosa* in particular is also a preferred nectar source for many butterfly species. The Glacial Lake Albany Germplasm can be planted by homeowners in butterfly gardens and by landowners in habitat restoration seedings that will provide food and attract butterflies. Being drought tolerant, this flower would be ideal for restoration seedings on drier sites, meadows and roadsides.

**Potential Area of Adaptation:** Butterfly milkweed is commonly found on sites with *dry* soils in clearings or edges of fields. The national range of butterfly milkweed is central New England to Minnesota south. The Glacial Lake Albany Germplasm is from the northern edge of the range.

**Availability of Plant Materials:** Glacial Lake Albany Germplasm butterfly milkweed can be obtained by contacting Don Shardlow, Manager, New York Seed Improvement Project, P.O. Box 218, Ithaca, NY 14851 (607-255-9869).

**References:**

Newcomb, L. 1977. *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide*. Little, Brown and Company. Boston, MA.

Miles, B. 1976. *Wildflower Perennials for Your Garden*. Stackpole Books. Mechanicsburg, PA.

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