



# ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

## PLANT CARE INFORMATION

### Desert Milkweed

*Asclepias erosa*

**DESCRIPTION:** Desert Milkweed is a perennial herb with erect yellow-green stems and foliage in shades of pale whitish-green to dark green with white veining. It may be hairless to very fuzzy. It is winter dormant, but grows quickly to 3' to 6' tall in the spring. Atop the stem is a rounded umbel of yellowish or cream-colored flowers. Butterflies and some beetles use milkweeds as nectar sources and the foliage as food. The alkaloids associated with this plant give the butterflies that feed on it protection. Desert Milkweed is native to southern California, Arizona, and northern Baja California, where it is most abundant in the desert regions. Native American's would boil the latex from this plant until hard and would use it as chewing gum.

**RECOMMENDED USE:** Plant in desert landscape to attract Monarch and Queen butterflies.

#### CULTURE:



**Hardiness:** Very hardy; to 0°F.



**Sun tolerance:** Needs full sun.



**Watering and feeding:** Low water use. May rot in heavy soil with too much irrigation. No fertilization necessary.



**Soil requirements:** This species requires well-drained soils and is limited to deserts and near desert conditions with sandy soils



**Pruning:** Can be pruned back to the ground in the fall.