



# ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

## PLANT CARE INFORMATION

### **Butterfly Weed** *Asclepias tuberosa*

**DESCRIPTION:** Butterfly Weed is a 2 foot tall herbaceous perennial that dies back in winter and resprouts from its underground tuber each spring. This species is prized for its large, flat-topped clusters of bright-orange and red flowers. Butterfly Weed blooms any time from May until September. Blooms are followed by attractive green pods that open to release silky "parachutes" to drift away on autumn winds. Butterfly weed is unique among milkweeds in that the sap is not milky and the leaves are not opposite. It occurs naturally in open woods and fields throughout much of North America. The caterpillars of monarch butterflies feed only on milkweed foliage. Adult butterflies of many species sip nectar from the beautiful blossoms of butterfly weed.

**RECOMMENDED USE:** Plant butterfly weed in mixed borders, meadows and natural areas. Butterfly weed is slow to emerge in spring, so you may want to mark where they are.

#### **CULTURE:**



**Hardiness:** Fully hardy to at least 15F.



**Sun tolerance:** Prefers full sun but can tolerate partial shade.



**Watering and feeding:** Tolerates some drought once established, but does better with regular watering and yearly fertilization.



**Soil requirements:** It prefers well-drained sandy soils.



**Pruning:** Cut old stems to the ground as they die back.