



Monarchs in the Rough is a program under the direction of Audubon International to increase pollinator habitat on golf courses. (USGA/Sam Greenwood)

MONARCHS IN THE ROUGH

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- Golf courses represent some of the last remaining green space in many communities.
- Monarchs in the Rough is a national program to establish pollinator habitat on golf courses.
- Monarch butterfly populations are in decline, and Monarchs in the Rough will supply enough milkweed and wildflower seed to plant 1 acre of butterfly habitat on your golf course.
- A National Fish and Wildlife grant is providing funds that prioritize the establishment of monarch habitat on golf courses in Western and Midwestern states.
- Creating habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators can help reduce maintained turfgrass acreage and brings many environmental benefits.

Monarch butterfly populations have declined by 90 percent during the last two decades. Fortunately, golf courses can make a difference in butterfly and pollinator conservation. Monarchs in the Rough is a pollinator protection program that has already shown great promise in its first year. The USGA is working with [Audubon International](#) to establish a network of pollinator habitat demonstration sites on golf courses across the country. The sites are marked with educational signs and provide the habitat needed by a variety of pollinators.

In 2018, Audubon International received a \$150,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support Monarchs in the Rough habitat projects. The USGA provided \$100,000 of matching funds that will help increase stewardship activities and increase monarch butterfly habitat on golf courses. Originally, the grant was for 10 states including Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin because these states are on the monarch butterfly's primary migration route. In March, the NFWF expanded the program to include Ohio and all states west of the Mississippi River.

Monarchs in the Rough provides a free educational sign and technical assistance to ensure success. Creating habitat for butterflies and other pollinators on golf courses will also reduce maintained turfgrass acreage and bring many other environmental benefits.

There were an estimated 2.3 million acres of golf course facilities in the U.S. in 2015, and native vegetation comprises approximately 26 percent of total facility acreage. This is a significant amount of land that can be converted to expand beneficial pollinator plantings over time. Audubon International estimates that there are up to 100,000 acres available for pollinator projects on golf courses. Monarchs in the Rough fits nicely with ongoing efforts at many golf courses to naturalize out-of-play areas and reduce inputs of water, labor, mowing and plant protectants.

Monarch habitat projects on golf courses will support the breeding and migration of the monarch butterfly. Sites on golf courses also will demonstrate how to manage commercial properties sustainably with native plants over the long term while providing benefits to at-risk pollinators other than the monarch butterfly.



Milkweed plants provide important habitat for monarch butterflies in out-of-play areas on golf courses.

Audubon International has nearly a 30-year history working with the golf course industry. They will contact golf courses, track seed distribution and planting success, and monitor vegetative and butterfly response in habitat areas. The USGA believes Monarchs in the Rough will accomplish important habitat establishment objectives by coordinating activities at golf facilities.

Don't miss your chance to demonstrate how the golf industry supports the environment. Sign up for [Monarchs in the Rough](#) today to get free native and regionally-appropriate seed to help support monarch butterfly populations.

Additional Information:

[Monarchs in the Rough Sign-up](#)

[Bring Back the Monarchs](#)

[Operation Monarch for Golf Courses](#)

[Monarchs in the Rough: Golf Courses Helping an Iconic Species](#)