

Niagara residents on a monarch mission

Nina Hendricks of Niagara, a resident of Victorian Pines, looks forward to this time of year. It's butterfly time. In 2019, a friend gave Nyna some monarch caterpillars in a quart jar.

She was fascinated by the metamorphosis and also concerned about the decline of the butterflies in general, so she bought a screen porch and rearing and releasing monarchs became her yearly mission.

She kept learning and the first year also met Ed Laarman who helped her tag her butterflies before the fall migration.

She released 40-50 butterflies in the first year.

Nyna is 87 and suffers from Parkinson's but that doesn't stop her from raising her prized monarchs.

She encouraged owner of Victorian Pines, Sally Pugh, and Sally be-

came a butterfly enthusiast also.

Pugh recently invited Ed Laarman to present a program to the residents. Sally and Nyna encouraged their grandchildren to come also.

Ed took participants through the entire cycle of the transformation from caterpillar to the miracle of butterfly. He also explained the path and the progression of the butterflies' yearly migration.

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Jacob Zawada with Ed Laarman as they bring a butterfly out of the "porch" he has grown in.



Nyna looking over leaves early in the season to find eggs.



Lucy Dallavalle and Audrey Janske With Ed Laarman during the recent monarch demonstration at Victorian Pines Assisted Living.

Did you know?

Midwestern states, including Wisconsin, once provided more than 85 percent of monarch butterflies in the eastern migratory population. The introduction of herbicide-tolerant corn and soybeans and the accompanying increase in herbicide use in the 1990s inadvertently led to steep losses as milkweed disappeared from between rows of corn and soybeans, according to studies by scientists including Karen Oberhauser, a longtime leading monarch researcher and Wisconsin Monarch Collaborative member.

To return native milkweed to the landscape, collaborative members will encourage farmers to add milkweed and nectar-producing wildflowers to non-productive areas including ditch banks, field margins and farm yards, says Oberhauser, director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum.

Other sectors — urban, suburban and rural residents, transportation and utility companies controlling land along roads and under transmission lines, public and private owners of conservation lands — will need to do their part, she says.

She is optimistic about the Wisconsin Monarch Collaborative and the larger national effort on behalf of monarchs.

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