



PROJECT  
MONARCH  
HEALTH

# Responsible Rearing



Rearing monarch caterpillars is a treasured activity in schools, homes and nature centers across the country and can be a valuable tool for science and education. However, rearing monarchs also comes with a great deal of responsibility, and it is important to make sure you are rearing for the right reasons.

Am I rearing responsibly?

YES!



NO

- I rear small numbers of caterpillars that I collect as late instar larvae
- I use the monarchs for education in a classroom, citizen science and/or personal enjoyment
- I bleach all containers, surfaces and supplies between groups of monarchs
- I raise monarchs singly or in very small groups to prevent crowding and limit disease spread

- I do not participate in monarch outreach or citizen science
- I rear many monarchs together in large or small enclosures
- I rear at least a hundred monarchs each year with the goal of boosting the population size
- I purchase my monarchs from a supplier

If this describes you, congratulations! You are contributing to monarch conservation and outreach, and adding to the knowledge base for citizen science. You can enhance your impact by establishing more native milkweeds and nectar plants in your community, protecting them from chemical biocides, and purchasing organic produce to support monarch friendly agriculture.

If any of these scenarios describes you, don't fret! Though it may seem like mass rearing will benefit the monarchs, the stress of overcrowding, increased disease risk and genetic similarity your monarchs experience might not be helpful to wild populations. Instead, establish high quality habitat for the monarchs to use naturally, and collect late instar larvae to raise in small numbers. Also, contribute your observations and data to citizen science!

If you have questions about the quality of your rearing practices, contact us at [monarchhealth@gmail.com](mailto:monarchhealth@gmail.com) for recommendations. Also, check out the MJV fact sheet on responsible rearing practices for more information:

[https://monarchjointventure.org/images/uploads/documents/Monarch\\_Rearing\\_Instructions.pdf](https://monarchjointventure.org/images/uploads/documents/Monarch_Rearing_Instructions.pdf)