



# Best Management Practices for Construction and Development Projects Mead's Milkweed *Asclepias meadii*

**Common name** • Mead's Milkweed  
**Scientific name** • *Asclepias meadii*  
**Federal status** • Threatened  
**State status** • Endangered

## Purpose and Use

The information in this document is to be used to help avoid and minimize species impacts due to construction practices. It is not intended to be used as a guide to manage habitat for a given species. If that is the goal, please contact the Department of Conservation for habitat management information. Because every project and location differs, following the recommendations within this document does not ensure that impacts will not occur to the species and additional information might be required in certain instances. Following the recommendations within this document does not complete Endangered Species Act consultation that may be necessary for species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act; please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for more information.

## Ecology

Mead's Milkweed was once widespread in the tallgrass prairies of the Midwest, including most of Missouri. Today, it can be found on prairie remnants and railroad rights-of-way, primarily in the Osage Plains region, and on igneous glades in the St. Francois Mountains region of the Ozarks. Maturation time from seed may be as long as five to eight years. Observations show that individual plants produce flowers for two or three years and then rest. In some cases, this rest period may involve the lack of shoot production (lack of growth above ground) for a few years.

## Reasons for Decline

Populations of Mead's Milkweed declined as native prairies were converted for agricultural and urban uses. Current threats include loss of habitat due to urbanization and agricultural land conversion, lack of fire, habitat fragmentation, decreased pollinator visitation in small populations, insect and fungal attacks, midsummer haying and pesticide application. The low number of individual plants at any one site may not attract potential pollinators, and this may be the cause for low reproductive success.

## Specific Recommendations

Projects being considered in potential Mead's Milkweed habitat should include a survey of the area for remnant native prairies or igneous glades. If present, native

prairies and igneous glades should be surveyed for Mead's Milkweed during early June.

- Delay haying until after Mead's Milkweed has dispersed seeds, i. e., mid-September or later.
- Use prescribed burning between late September and April 1 to stimulate sexual reproduction in Mead's Milkweed. Conduct some prescribed burns in late September or October to stimulate Mead's Milkweed and other forbs. Burn management units at least once every five years.
- Be sure that land managers and permittee workers are not attempting to destroy colonies of the bees that pollinate Mead's Milkweed. Colonial bees can harass workers who, sometimes resort to pouring gasoline down holes in the ground to kill them. Later haying, as recommended, would lessen the potential for bees being a nuisance.
- On grazed sites, use moderate to light stocking rates and grazing practices that include rest periods to allow Mead's Milkweed to recover and produce seed.
- Avoid use of herbicides unless restricted to spot spraying of target species or apply outside of Mead's Milkweed April to mid-September growing season.
- Areas adjacent to existing Mead's Milkweed sites should be managed in such a way as to prevent the introduction of non-native species and other invasive plants and to avoid herbicide/pesticide runoff.

## General Recommendations

Refer to Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Streams and Rivers.

If your project involves the use of Federal Highway Administration transportation funds, these recommendations may not fulfill all contract requirements. Please contact the Missouri Department of Transportation at 573-526-4778 or [www.modot.mo.gov/ehp/index.htm](http://www.modot.mo.gov/ehp/index.htm) for additional information on recommendations.

## Information Contacts

For further information regarding regulations for development near prairies, contact:

For species information:

[Missouri Department of Conservation](http://www.mdc.mo.gov)  
Resource Science Division  
P.O. Box 180

2901 W. Truman Blvd  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180  
Telephone: 573/751-4115

For species information and Endangered Species Act  
Coordination:

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)  
Ecological Services  
101 Park Deville Drive, Suite A  
Columbia, MO 65203-0007  
Telephone: 573/234-2132

For Clean Water Act Coordination:

[Missouri Department of Natural Resources](#)  
Water Protection Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176  
Telephone: 573/751-1300, 800/361-4827

[U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)  
Regulatory Branch  
700 Federal Building  
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896  
Telephone: 816/983-3990

[U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)  
Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division  
901 North 5th Street  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
Telephone: 913/551-7307

## **Disclaimer**

These Best Management Practices were prepared by the Missouri Department of Conservation with assistance from state and federal agencies, contractors and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat. Compliance with these Best Management Practices is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law nor by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, and state or local laws need to be considered for construction and development projects, and require permits and/or consultation with the appropriate agency. Following the recommendations provided in this document will help reduce and avoid project impacts to the species, but impacts may still occur. Please contact the appropriate agency for further coordination and to complete compliance requirements.