

Press Release



Living Acres research finds best practices for establishing milkweed on-farm

BASF biodiversity research focuses on helping increase the iconic monarch butterfly population

NEW ORLEANS, March 2, 2016 -- BASF today announced first-year findings from Living Acres, a biodiversity research initiative focused on helping increase the iconic monarch butterfly population through establishing milkweed in non-crop areas. The research, conducted on the BASF Research Farm in Holly Springs, North Carolina, provides best practices for establishing and maintaining the plants in non-production areas.

“Sustainability and biodiversity are two important areas of focus for BASF,” said Max Safarpour, Department Head, Director of Global Regulatory & Government Affairs, BASF. “Living Acres puts years of research and development experience to work to find a way for biodiversity to exist alongside modern agriculture.”

The research, conducted in 2015, found that creating milkweed refuges will take an upfront investment of time, but once established it should support itself year after year with minimal effort.

“The solution will not happen overnight,” said Luke Bozeman, Group Leader, Field Biology, BASF. “But the effort taken to improve monarch butterfly habitats will quickly make an impact.”

BASF research found milkweed plants are most successful when established through a planting process using root sections. Though it is common to plant milkweed by seeding, only a small number of common seeds germinate. Planting root stock or buds results in the most successful establishment.

“Plants from root sections are much more vigorous than seedlings and will grow rapidly,” said Harold D. Coble, Ph.D., professor emeritus of the faculty of North Carolina State University. “They can easily reach up to six feet in height under good growing conditions.”

Under a grant from BASF, Dr. Coble identified seven steps for successfully establishing milkweed in non-production areas: seed/root, pot, plant, spread, water, grow and mow. While some areas of a farm may better support milkweed stands than others, this work focuses on non-cropland areas such as ditches, roadsides, alleyways and other border areas.

“As we increase our biodiversity efforts,” Safarpour continued, “BASF will continue to partner with farmers to help them continue to be excellent stewards of the land.”

To learn more about Living Acres and download the best practices brochure, visit agro.basf.us/sustainability.

About BASF's Crop Protection division

With sales of more than €5.8 billion in 2015, BASF's Crop Protection division provides innovative solutions for agriculture, turf and ornamental plants, pest control and public

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