

# Milkweed Plants

## Description

In this activity, students observe the life cycle of milkweed plants.

## Time Frame

1 lesson (45 minutes)

## Correlation to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

During this activity, students will be exposed to the following Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:

**Note:** Some TEKS statements below end with a ; or *and* and nothing thereafter—this indicates that further TEKS statements follow but are not included here.

**(2.6) Science concepts.** The student knows that systems have parts and are composed of organisms and objects. The student is expected to:

- (C) observe and record the functions of plant parts; and

**(2.7) Science concepts.** The student knows that many types of change occur. The student is expected to:

- (A) observe, measure, record, analyze, predict, and illustrate changes in size, mass, temperature, color, position, quantity, sound, and movement;

**Note:** The TEKS listed here are the main content TEKS for this activity; however, this activity may also cover additional content and process skills included in other TEKS.

## Materials

Pictures of the following types of plants:

- Milkweed plant with leaves
- Milkweed plant without leaves
- Milkweed plant with new leaves growing
- Milkweed plant with seedpods and seeds

Drawing paper and crayons or markers

Milkweed plants and seeds (optional)

Milkweed Plant Leaf-Growth Sequence page (included at the end of this activity)

**SAFETY:** If you show students actual milkweed plants, caution them that milkweed sap can be poisonous to people. Students should not put any part of the plant in their mouths, and they should wash their hands after touching the plant.

### Background Information for the Teacher

Since the milkweed plant is a perennial, it grows back each spring. After the plant blooms, seedpods are formed, and then the fuzzy seeds are carried by the wind. These plants get their name from the milky sap that is released from any break in the stem of the plant.

### Procedures

1. Discuss the milkweed plant with students. Describe the plant and talk about how some butterflies use it as a food source.
2. Show students the four pictures of the different phases of the milkweed plant's life cycle. Put students in groups and ask the groups to decide in what order the phases would occur and why. Discuss student answers with the class.
3. Have students think about the importance of the parts of the plant. Ask questions such as
  - What is the purpose of the roots of the plant?
  - What is the purpose of the stem of the plant?
  - What is the purpose of the leaves of the plant?
  - Can the plant function if it loses all its leaves?
4. Ask students to complete the milkweed plant growth sequence in their journals and explain their answers.

**Note:** Students might start the sequence at almost any point as long as they put it in order.

## Milkweed Plant Leaf-Growth Sequence

In the boxes below, draw pictures showing the leaf-growth sequence of the milkweed plant. Below each picture, describe the change that is occurring.

1.	2.
3.	4.