

## HELPING BIODIVERSITY SPREAD ITS WINGS.

How the Terry Hills Golf Course partnered with BASF to help foster a thriving monarch butterfly population.

Thad Thompson has been the course superintendent of Terry Hills Golf Course in Batavia, New York, for more than 12 years. The 27-hole public facility is located in the western part of the state and welcomes thousands of players a year from all over the area. While Terry Hills is known for its excellent playing conditions, Thad and his team also take pride in the course's natural beauty and are always thinking of new ways to help the natural areas of the course thrive. "From our perspective, we wanted to do something that was environmentally responsible," Thad said.

One of these ideas in particular was to let a well-manicured but rarely used area of the course between their 12th, 13th and 14th holes become overtaken by natural growth. "At the start, we had never really planned on anything other than letting the grass grow," said Thad. "Then someone had the brilliant idea to plant some wildflowers in these areas to help lure in pollinators. Then what do you know? Milkweed started growing in that area," he said.

Around that time, Thad was speaking with a rep at BASF about his efforts to foster this natural area. That's when he learned about the BASF Living Acres #MonarchChallenge. In 2015, BASF began the #MonarchChallenge initiative to help encourage biodiversity and provide habitats for the monarch butterfly. Specifically, the program focuses on repopulating milkweed in natural areas or helping to protect native milkweed, whether on a farm or golf course, to create a welcoming breeding ground where pollinators can thrive. With the area sectioned off and natural milkweed already taking root, Terry Hills was the perfect match for this program, according to Thad. "I looked at the benefits of the plants that we already had, and then discovered that there was a company out there in BASF that was helping," he said. "It was a no-brainer."

From there, BASF helped Thad dial-in his monarch habitat, providing him with more plants and specially marked signage to help keep the area safe and secure from player traffic. "Now that we've educated people, they are staying out and truly respecting it as an environmentally sensitive area," Thad said.

Beyond the benefit of biodiversity and helping the monarch (and other pollinators) populations grow, Thad and the team at Terry Hills have been equally proud of the educational impact the habitat has had locally. It has created a feature on the course for the community to take pride in outside of the game of golf. The monarch habitat and story of the BASF Living Acres #MonarchChallenge has lured in students, schools and curious citizens to study the area and learn more about the benefits of pollinators. "I take pride in the education we're providing through this area," he says. "We're trying to get the word out and promote environmental responsibility and stewardship."

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— Thad Thompson, Golf Course Superintendent, Terry Hills Golf Course

The Terry Hills monarch habitat began as a simple idea nearly a decade ago. Today, with a little hard work and the involvement of the BASF Living Acres #MonarchChallenge, an acre patch of unused course in western New York has been transformed into a diverse pollinator habitat home to an array of milkweed, wildflowers, bees, monarch butterflies and other wildlife. "Almost every night I go out to the area just to observe the activity. I've seen butterflies mating, the stillness, the natural beauty," says Thad.

To learn more about the BASF Living Acres #MonarchChallenge and the steps you can take to help transform your landscape into a sanctuary for monarch butterflies, pollinators and healthy biodiversity, visit [living-acres.basf.us](https://living-acres.basf.us).