

Gardening for Butterflies

DENISE WHITTLE



In the UK our gardens cover two million acres of land – that's 15 million gardens, each of which can be a mini nature reserve for butterflies and moths, cared for by gardeners.



Butterfly
Conservation

SAVING BUTTERFLIES, MOTHS AND OUR ENVIRONMENT



Create a wildlife haven

Butterflies and moths are far less common now than they were 50 years ago and you don't have to look hard to find out why

Since the 1940s, 97 per cent of wildflower meadows have been destroyed, along with much downland, ancient woodland and peatbogs. Many species are in serious decline, as their countryside habitat has been lost to industrial and housing developments, intensive farming and roads.

Your garden, or even a window box, can provide a lifeline for butterflies struggling to find food and shelter.

Left: Small Tortoiseshell





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Top ten nectar plants

1. Buddleia
2. Ice Plant
3. Lavender
4. Michaelmas Daisy
5. Oregano
6. Aubretia
7. Red Valerian
8. French Marigold
9. Hebe
10. Candytuft.



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For more information about butterfly
friendly gardening visit
www.butterfly-conservation.org



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Encourage butterflies into your garden

FLOWER POWER

Butterflies visit gardens to drink nectar from flowers. A window box in a built-up area can supply the fuel a butterfly needs to fly on to a more suitable habitat.

In a larger plot you can provide nectar throughout the season and enjoy butterflies all summer long. Many good nectar plants are hardy, perennial and easy to grow.

Butterflies seek out the warmest part of your garden so grow flowers in sunny sheltered areas.

THE HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

It is important to support butterflies at every stage of their life cycle. Adult butterflies lay eggs on the foodplant of their caterpillar.

To encourage butterflies to breed in your back garden make sure you cater for their caterpillars too. Grow Nasturtium near the vegetable patch to lure





GO WILD

If you have space, create a wildflower meadow. Sow a wildflower and grass seed mixture on bare ground or allow grasses already there to grow and add wildflower plants.

Try to buy genuine UK wildflower seed. Flora Locale has a list of specialist growers and suppliers of British native plants. Visit www.floralocale.org

In the first year cut the area several times to give wildflowers a chance against competitive grasses. In subsequent years, grass can be cut at the end of each summer. Leave a few patches of long grass where caterpillars can pass the winter.

Large and Small White caterpillars away from the brassicas. Stinging nettles are a favourite of the Comma and Red Admiral. You can limit their spread by planting them in a large container sunk in the ground.

GREEN FINGERS

Environmentally friendly gardening can make a big difference to butterflies.

Peat bogs are home to many special animals and plants, including the Large Heath butterfly, which is declining across Europe.

Avoid peat-based compost and help to preserve these rare habitats. Good alternatives are available from garden centres.

Cut down on your use of herbicides and pesticides. They kill butterflies, moths and many other pollinating insects, as well as ladybirds, ground beetles and spiders – the natural enemies of your garden pests.



Garden Butterflies

Identify the magical jewels that are our garden butterflies

This guide only covers the most commonly occurring garden butterflies. If you see any other species or would like to know more about how to encourage butterflies, please visit www.butterfly-conservation.org



Peacock 63-69mm

The Peacock flashes the eye-spots on its wings to stop birds trying to eat it!



Holly Blue 35mm

The Holly Blue is the only blue butterfly found in our gardens; the caterpillar feeds on Holly and Ivy.



Painted Lady 64-70mm

The Painted Lady arrives here every year after flying all the way from Europe.



Green-veined White 50mm

There are four white butterflies in Britain, and none of them are called the Cabbage White.



Large White 63-70mm

The Large White caterpillar is brightly coloured to warn predators that it is full of poisonous mustard oils.



Comma 55-50mm

The Comma's name comes from the comma shaped marking on the underside of its wing.



Gatekeeper 40-47mm

The Gatekeeper gets its name because it likes to live in hedgerows, so it is often spotted around gates.



Meadow Brown 50-55mm

Because the Meadow Brown caterpillar feeds on many different grasses, this species can be found in many places.



Orange-tip 45-50mm

Only the male Orange Tip has orange tips. The female is white all over, but both have green camouflage underneath.



Red Admiral 67-72mm

The Red Admiral used to migrate from Africa but now lives here due to climate change.



Small Tortoiseshell 50-56mm

Blue spots on wing edges are a key difference between Small Tortoiseshell and Painted Lady.



Small White 48mm

The Small White is attracted to white flowers where it likes to rest as it is camouflaged from predators.

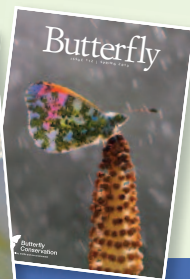


Speckled Wood 47-50mm

The Speckled Wood is territorial and will defend its patch from other butterflies, dogs and people.

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www.butterfly-conservation.org/membership



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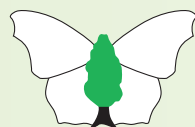
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