



Butterfly Gardening

Hints and tips for attracting butterflies to the garden



Gloucestershire

Butterflies are some of Britain's most colourful wildlife. Much loved by children and adults, their high dependency on a limited number of plants makes them especially vulnerable in a changing landscape where habitats and food plants are being lost. This has unfortunately led to the extinction of some species, whilst others are in decline.

However, the garden can offer these enigmatic creatures real hope if a variety of plants are grown in sunny, sheltered spots. They can also be helped further and encouraged to stay longer if there are a few 'food plants' for their young.

To help you create a colourful border attractive to butterflies we have provided a few hints and tips and a list of suitable plants. Many of the plants will also be attractive to bees and other insects. These in turn will provide natural food for birds and bats, especially if a few night-scented plants are included for nocturnal moths.

Planning a Butterfly Border

Select a site

Choose a sunny, sheltered spot. Butterflies need the sun to warm them up and get them going and enjoy basking in the sun. They will not visit flowers in the shade.

Choose your plants

Pick some that flower in spring, summer and autumn to provide a continuous supply of nectar. Old-fashioned varieties tend to be more nectar-rich, whilst double flowers and new hybrids have very little.

Caterpillars

Include some food plants for the young; without these butterflies will continue to decline.

Hibernation

Thick vegetation will provide cover for butterflies that hibernate in winter.

Colour

Plant groups of the same species in threes or fives. This will give a strong visual sign to passing butterflies and better scent.

Nettles in sunny location will host the caterpillars of the peacock, red admiral, small tortoiseshell and comma.



Comma on ice plant
photo: Richard Burkmar

Nectar-rich Plants for Butterflies

Spring flowering

Alyssum	Polyanthus
Cowslip	Grape hyacinth
Forget-me-not	Honesty
Primrose	Lady's smock/cuckooflower

Summer flowering

Hyssop	Wallflower
Lavender	Field scabious
Marigolds	Thyme
Verbena	Goldenrod
Marjoram	
Buddleia	

Autumn flowering

Lavender	Fuchsia
Ice plant	Russian sage
Michaelmas daisies	Ivy

Plants for breeding butterflies

Species	Plants preferred
Peacock	Common nettle
Small tortoiseshell	Common nettle
Comma	Common nettle, hop
Red admiral	Common nettle, hop
Large skipper	Cock's foot, false brome
Small skipper	Yorkshire fog
Dingy skipper	Common bird's foot trefoil
Large white	Cabbage family, nasturtium, wild mignonette
Small white	Cabbage family, nasturtium, hedge mustard, garlic mustard
Green-veined white	Cabbage family, cuckoo flower, charlock, nasturtium
Orange tip	Cuckoo flower, garlic mustard
Small copper	Common sorrel, Sheep's sorrel
Common blue	Common bird's foot trefoil
Painted lady	Thistles, common nettle
Wall	False brome, cock's foot, Yorkshire fog, wavy hair grass
Meadow brown	Fescue species, meadow-grass, bents
Ringlet	Cock's foot, false brome, tufted hair-grass, common couch



Large white caterpillar on nasturtium
photo: Sue Tatman

Avoid using pesticides in the garden. They can kill caterpillars



Tortoiseshell on corn cockle
photo: Richard Burkmar

Living landscape

Our gardens represent a vast living landscape; and with an estimated 16 million gardens in the UK, the way they are managed can make a big difference to wildlife.

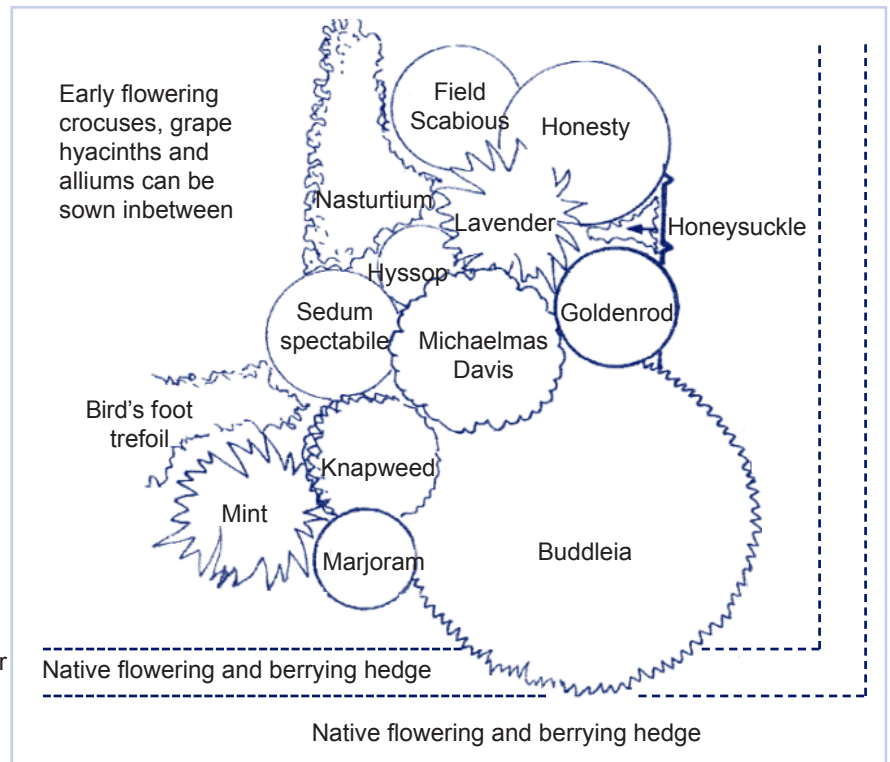
Across gardens and beyond, The Wildlife Trusts' vision to create a Living Landscape involves enlarging, improving and joining-up areas of wildlife-rich land in all parts of the UK. There are now over 100 inspirational Living Landscape schemes around the UK, rich in opportunities for sustainability, learning, better health and wellbeing. What is good for wildlife is good for people too.

For more information go to

www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

Nectar-Rich Wildflowers for butterflies

Lady's bedstraw	Knapweed
Betony	Lady's smock/cuckoo flower
Bird's foot trefoil	Common mallow
Bluebell	Corn marigold
Bugle	Oxlip
Meadow buttercup	Purple loosestrife
Red campion	Ragged Robin
Red clover	St John's wort
Wild primrose	Field scabious
Cowslip	Teasel
Ox-eye daisy	Thrift
Dog violet	Wild thyme
Feverfew	Common toadflax
Harebell	Viper's bugloss
Herb Robert	Yarrow



Hibernation

White, browns and blues over-winter as chrysalis.

Painted lady and red admiral migrate to Europe.

Brimstone, peacock and small tortoiseshell hibernate in shrubs and buildings as adults.



Bird's foot trefoil
photo: Sue Tatman

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