

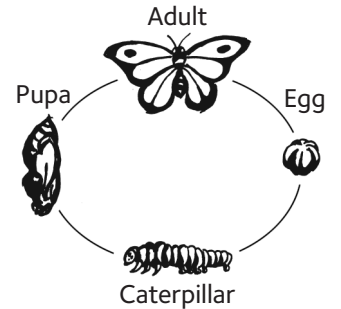


Wildlife Gardening: a butterfly garden

Butterflies in your garden

Watch out for the silent summer fluttering of garden visitors like the red admiral and orange tip. If you live in north London you are slightly more likely to see the wall brown butterfly, often called 'the London Eye' during the eighteenth century. South of the Thames, you have more chance of seeing the speckled wood, which does not share its name with a famous landmark.

The butterfly life cycle - each stage of the life cycle requires different food types i.e. herbaceous food plants for the caterpillars, and nectar rich flowers for the butterfly.



Butterflies and moths in London

Butterflies are found in a range of places in London. Some are quite rare - like the richly-coloured purple hairstreak only found in the canopy of old oak trees, others like the meadow brown can be found in long grass in many parks and gardens. The chalk meadows to the south of London are particularly delightful, look here for marbled whites, and dark green fritillaries as well as the rare and secretive small blue. Some butterflies, like the Camberwell Beauty, and the red admiral only come to this country during summer, spending winter in the warmer climate of continental Europe.

Table with 12 columns (Jan-Dec) and 7 rows (Common blue, Meadow brown, Orangetip, Holly blue, Small tortoiseshell, Red admiral). Each cell contains an icon of a butterfly or caterpillar and a brief description of its activity in that month.

Nettles

Are important to the caterpillars of peacock, small tortoiseshell, red admiral and comma. A sunny spot is essential so butterflies can find them. Put them in a big pot if you don't want them in your border. Cut back in late June to get new growth for the second brood of caterpillars. Excellent compost activator too.

If you are interested in taking part in a survey of butterflies in your garden this summer, contact Butterfly Conservation on 0870 7744309

Choosing plants for butterflies and bees

- Always choose single flowered varieties. A mixture of flowers attracts more helpful insects and less pests.
- Link sunny borders around the edge of your garden for choice browsing.
- Aim to have plants in flower from February to November, all the time when hungry butterflies are on the wing (see the calendar overleaf).
- Avoid planting for only one season at the expense of others, and expect to find most butterflies in summer.

Good nectar flowers for butterflies

Butterflies' taste in flowers will vary slightly from year to year - depending on climate, and alternative food sources. These common plants are some top favourites.

Spring	Summer		Autumn
Blackthorn	Campions	Buddleia	Goldenrod
Bramble	Ragged robin	Field scabious	Devil's bit scabious
Willow	Birdsfoot trefoil	Lobelia	Honeysuckle
Valerian	Raspberry	Phlox	Nasturtium
Red valerian	Teasel	Lavender	Ice plant
Honesty	Hemp agrimony	Mint	Michaelmas daisy
Forget-me-not	Common fleabane	Privet	Verbena
Aubretia	Yarrow	Statice	
Hebe	Cranesbill	French Marigold	
Woundwort	Purple loosestrife	Marjoram	
Alyssum	Knapweed	Runner Bean	
Wallflower	Thistle	Ivy	
Primrose	Chives	Heather	
Hyacinth	Wild Thyme		

Essential caterpillar food plants Remember they need sunshine!

Birdsfoot trefoil or black medic	common blue
Dock or sorrel	small copper
Garlic mustard or dames violet	orange tip, painted lady large, large, small and green-veined white
Cuckoo flower	orange tip
Stinging nettle	small tortoiseshell, comma, peacock, red admiral
Hop	comma
Holly and ivy	holly blue
Common or alder buckthorn	brimstone
Nasturtium	large white, small white
Honesty	orange-tip
Sweet Rocket	orange-tip

Grasses

Annual meadow grass	meadow brown, gatekeeper, wall
Cocksfoot	large skipper, ringlet, meadow brown, speckled wood, wall
Sheeps fescue	meadow brown, grayling
Timothy	skippers, marbled white
Yorkshire fog	skippers

Some of the best flowers for bumbles

Fat and furry bumble bees need nectar too - and need our help in getting it, many species are rare or threatened. Try these flowers for happy humble bumbles, remember single-flowered varieties have most nectar and pollen.

Selfheal	Purple loosestrife	Hawthorn	Foxglove
Primrose	Beans	Raspberry	Forget-me-not
Deadnettle	Nasturtium	Apple	Hyssop
Vetches	Golden rod	Azalea	Bluebell
Comfrey	Clovers	Flowering currant	Gorse
Borage	Lupins		

Design

Put your butterfly border against a south-facing wall to absorb heat and give tired butterflies a chance to warm up. In the sun at the front of the border you can put a 'basking stone' a large upturned flowerpot, or make your own artificial boulder from Geoff Hamilton's mix of two parts coir, two parts sharp sand and one part Portland cement.



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Moths

Watch out for spectacularly large and elegant hawkmoths, with caterpillars the size of a little finger, or the small intensely red and black burnet moths, which fly by day. Supply night time nectar for late fliers with evening primrose, nicotiana, honeysuckle, and nightscented stock.