



Wild
About
Gardens



#wildaboutgardens

wildaboutgardens.org.uk



Grow a secret garden for butterflies

with

a sky original

THE
SECRET
GARDEN



Green-veined white © Jon Hawkins





Why are butterflies great?

We love butterflies. They're vibrant, eye-catching additions to our gardens, but so much more than that. They are helpful pollinators. When butterflies land on flowers to feed on nectar, they transfer pollen.

Butterflies, moths and their caterpillars are important in the food chain, being prey to many species of birds and bats. You may also see garden birds taking caterpillars to feed to their young in the spring and summer. It can take up to 10,000 caterpillars to rear a brood of blue tits!

They need our help

Butterflies are good environmental indicators. This means that if butterfly populations are going up or down, we get a good sense of how well the rest of the environment is doing. Butterflies and moths aren't doing too well at the moment, with many species declining in recent years.

The good news is that we can help butterflies and moths through gardening! Collectively our gardens can provide important places, homes and food sources for these special creatures.

A secret garden

We've been inspired by the new movie adaptation of *The Secret Garden*, a Sky Original, and just like us the filmmakers are passionate about butterflies! Gardening is an essential part of *The Secret Garden* story and we're encouraging everybody to garden with butterflies in mind!



In the story, the garden eases grief, heals rifts and brings the joy out in all who experience it. Make a special place for wildlife – your very own Secret Garden where you can replenish your soul, reconnect with nature and help



Did you know?



Butterflies can **cross continents!** Painted ladies migrate north from Africa every year, at a speed of **up to 30 miles per hour.**

Caterpillars can grow **10,000-fold** in just a few weeks – that's like a baby growing to the size of a sperm whale!



The UK has **59 species of butterfly and around 2,500 moths,** although there's actually very little difference between butterflies and moths. In fact, there's an argument for considering them the same animal!



The swallowtail butterfly is our **largest butterfly** with a wingspan of almost **10cm.**

The **brimstone** could be the very first butterfly. There's a theory that its bright yellow wings inspired the name butter-coloured fly.



Planting for butterflies & moths

A sunny, sheltered garden is ideal for tempting in butterflies. With the right flowers you could make a mini haven for all sorts of wildlife.

Many flowers provide both pollen and nectar so will attract a range of visitors, and sometimes the clue is in the shape. Many flowers of the daisy family, such as sunflowers and asters, help to attract butterflies and bees with their flat, open tops, perfect for landing. Other flowers in the campion and honeysuckle families have narrow tubular centres, which moths and butterflies may have exclusive access to by making use of their long tongues. Brush-like flowers, like buddleia, also make for good resting places and nectar access.

An ideal butterfly garden would include a wide range of flower shapes, full of seasonal perennials that offer nectar for early arrivals such as brimstones, through to the last red admirals in autumn. But it's also important to think about caterpillars – even if you spot a few holes in your plants remember, the more caterpillars you can support, the more butterflies and moths there will be!

Along with the plant options on the following page, you could include an open area for wildflowers and grasses to attract egg-laying females. A site with low soil fertility is ideal. Seek out butterfly mixes from wildflower seed suppliers.

Planning your butterfly garden...

- ✓ Plant large clumps of larval food plants together.
- ✓ Aim for year-round flower interest, with early and late sources of nectar.
- ✓ Only use peat-free compost to help prevent damage to rare habitats.
- ✓ Delay cutting back in the autumn, tidying borders in later winter instead.
- ✓ Don't use pesticides: these can affect all garden wildlife.



Top butterfly plants to lure in the butterflies

Spring: Primroses, sweet William, native bluebells, bugle, forget-me-not, cuckoo flower.

Summer: Cornflower, French marigold, knapweed, marjoram, scabious, thistle, purple loosestrife, hemp agrimony, bramble, and many herbs, including, marjoram, thyme, lavender and sage.

Autumn: Flowering ivy, asters, ice plant, hebe, buddleia, verbena.

Top larval food plants

Lady's-smock, *Cardamine pratensis* (orange-tip butterfly), good for wetter soil.

Bird's foot trefoil, *Lotus corniculatus* (common blue butterfly).

Common sorrel, *Rumex acetosa* (small copper butterfly).

Fescue grass, *Festuca sp* (meadow brown butterfly).

Holly, *Ilex aquifolium* (holly blue butterfly).

Ivy, *Hedera helix* (holly blue butterfly).

Nasturtium, *Tropaeolum majus* (large white, small white and green-veined white butterflies).

Yorkshire fog grass, *Holcus lanatus* (marbled white, speckled wood and small skipper butterflies).

Stinging nettles, *Urtica dioica* (comma, peacock, red admiral and small tortoiseshell), requires a large area.



Plant a butterfly box...

You will need

- A windowsill plant box



- Peat-free compost



- A hand trowel or fork



Pale-yellow scabious



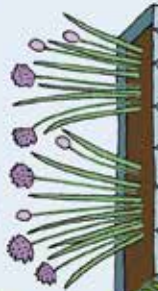
Aubrieta



Nectar-rich plants for butterflies

- Viper's bugloss • Thyme • Sage • Forget-me-not • Fennel • Mint

Chives



Cuckoo flower



Cabbage



Nasturtium



Plants as food for caterpillars

- Common sorrel • Bird's-foot-trefoil

1 Choose a plant box appropriate to the size of your windowsill or outside space – make sure it has drainage holes.

2 Fill your box halfway with peat-free compost.

3 Pick three plants and place them in the box. Top up the container with peat-free compost and water well. If scattering seeds, follow the instructions on the packet.

Remember it can sometimes take a little while for pollinators to find your plants.

While a chance to glimpse a butterfly may be appealing, without caterpillars (larvae) there'd be no butterflies, so we need to make food for both. Try to plant one box of each! Plant one variety for larvae, but mixed varieties for butterflies.

Plant a butterfly border...

You will need

- A sunny edge of your garden (at least 3m x 1m)
- Composted green waste
- A mix of seeds or plants suitable for butterflies and their caterpillars (see list on right)
- A spade



1 Prepare your butterfly border by digging up any old roots in that area and turning the soil over.

2 If using seeds, scatter them on the soil. Alternatively, place your plants on top of the soil in their pots to decide where you would like to plant them – tall ones at the back and smaller ones at the front.

3 Dig a hole twice as large as the plant. Fork a little garden compost into the soil you've removed, place the plants in the hole and firm back in with the improved soil. Water well.



- Holly
- Bird's-foot-trefoil
- Thistle
- Nasturtium
- Hops
- Cuckoo flower
- Forget-me-not
- Thyme
- Sage
- Buddleia
- Verbena
- Ivy
- Scabious
- Viper's bugloss
- Lavender
- Hebe



Position the hops against a wall or fence, or up an obelisk.

You should plant a mixture that are suitable host plants for caterpillars and that give nectar to butterflies. Pick ones that flower at different times of the year.

A butterfly garden in action



Brimstone butterfly

A sunny wall provides a sunbathing spot for butterflies

Ivy

Garden tiger moth

Hops

Red admiral butterfly

Thistle

A long season of **nectar-rich flowers** means you can cater for as many butterflies as possible.

Large white butterfly

Sage

Hebe

Thyme

Lavender

Peacock butterfly



Silver Y moth



Holly blue butterfly



Cinnabar moth



Hops, holly and nettles provide food for caterpillars

Verbena

Holly

Comma butterfly



Nettles

Orange-tip butterfly

Pale yellow scabious

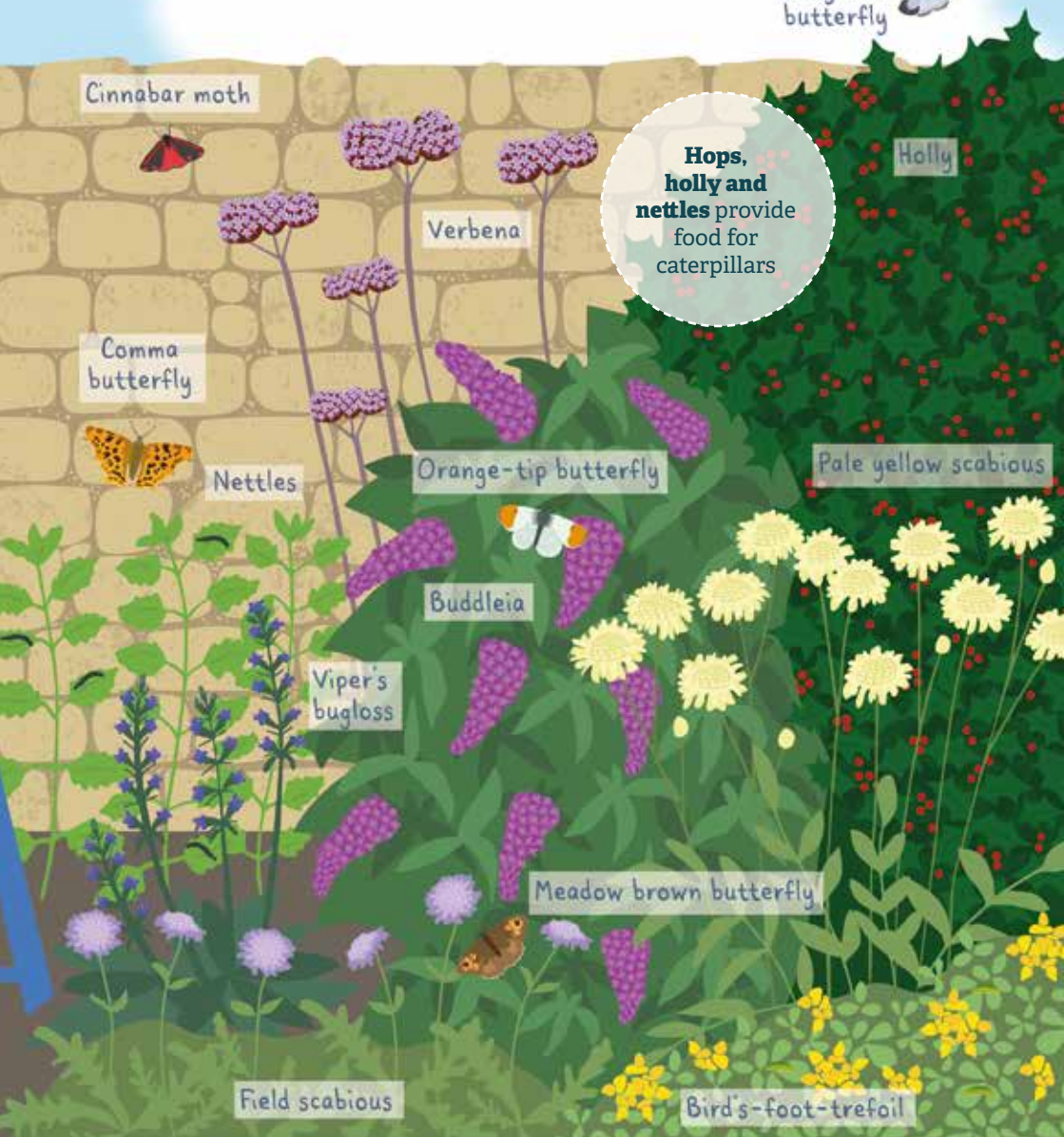
Buddleia

Viper's bugloss

Meadow brown butterfly

Field scabious

Bird's-foot-trefoil



Lifecycle of moths and butterflies

Many butterflies and moths spend the majority of their lives in the caterpillar or pupal stages.

A good food supply is crucial to allow caterpillars to turn into adults, so the most valuable gardens leave plenty of room for these hungry young!

Typically, caterpillars hatch from eggs laid by adult females after two weeks. Once the caterpillar has eaten enough, it sheds its skin for the last time and turns into a pupa. It is within this cocoon that the caterpillar will metamorphose into the adult butterfly.

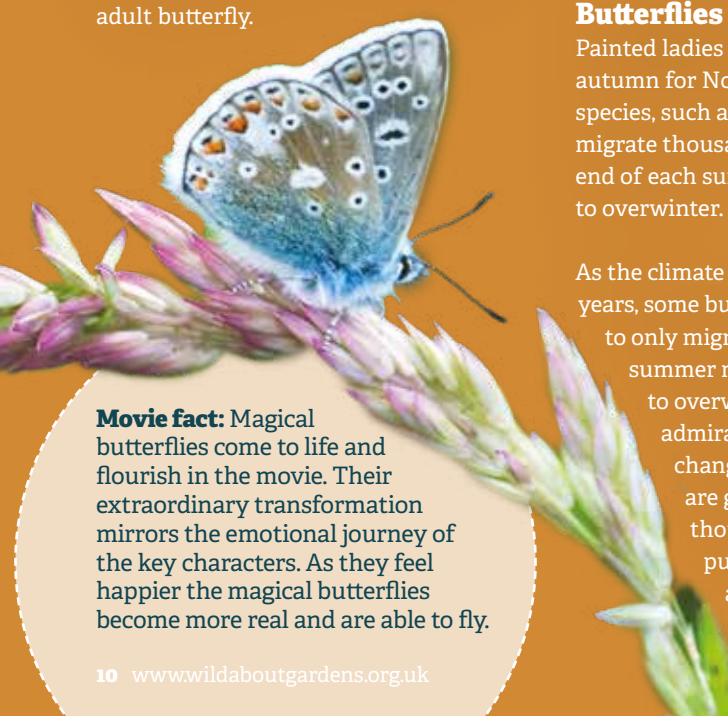
Seeking shelter

There are 59 species of butterfly and more than 2,500 moths in Britain. Several species of butterfly – including brimstone, comma, small tortoiseshell and peacock – overwinter as adults and will seek out sheltered spots in late autumn to lay dormant until the spring. Others overwinter as eggs, caterpillars or pupae.

Butterflies on the move

Painted ladies leave our shores each autumn for North Africa. Other exotic species, such as the famed monarch, migrate thousands of kilometres at the end of each summer to find suitable areas to overwinter.

As the climate has warmed in recent years, some butterflies once understood to only migrate to Britain for the summer months are now thought to overwinter here, such as red admirals. This doesn't mean that changing weather patterns are good news for butterflies though, as populations can be pushed out of natural ranges and may face steep declines.



Movie fact: Magical butterflies come to life and flourish in the movie. Their extraordinary transformation mirrors the emotional journey of the key characters. As they feel happier the magical butterflies become more real and are able to fly.

Pollen collectors

Like bees and other flower visitors, moths and butterflies are helpful pollinators. By spreading pollen from plant to plant, these insects help plants to reproduce.

In fact, our pollinators not only help plants to reproduce, they ensure that we can enjoy fruits and many vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers and courgettes too.

While they cannot carry as much pollen as some bees, which have specially created 'sacs' for storage, butterflies collect pollen on their legs and bodies as they gather nectar, carrying it from flower to flower.

Night workers

Moths tend to seek out white and lighter coloured flowers as they are easier to see in the dark. A study carried out with university researchers and Butterfly Conservation found that moths are also important pollinators for agricultural crops – carrying pollen over large distances in the cover of dark.



Take notice of nature

Green spaces make us feel happier and more relaxed, so spend a moment in your garden taking notice of what insects and flowers you can see.

Spend a mindful moment

More and more of us are spending much of our time indoors. We know that time in nature is good for us though, so let mindfulness become "wildfulness" by taking time out in your garden or green space.



You've probably noticed how spotting butterflies or birds, or walking through woodlands, or alongside rivers and streams can help to lift your mood. Make some time for nature today and enjoy the restorative benefits.

Find a quiet spot and close your eyes. Synchronise your breathing with the leaves rustling in the breeze and feel the earth beneath your feet.

5 Ways to Wellbeing



Be Active

Go outside for a walk or explore your nearest nature reserve



Connect

With the people around you, share your wildlife experiences



Give

Do something to help your local area and the people and wildlife that live there



Notice

The everyday wildness on your doorstep, from 'weeds' to bees



Learn

Try something new outside – find out how to identify that butterfly

Movie fact:

The children and the garden in the movie both blossom when they spend time together. Nature helps us to feel better but we can help nature flourish too



Match the **adult** to the **caterpillar**...



Small tortoiseshell
© Vicky Nall



Peacock
© Amy Lewis



Cinnabar moth
© Justin Bridges



Brown argus
© Sarah Taylor



Large white
© Megan Lowe



A



© Wince Masling

C



© Peter Eagles

B



© Vaughan Matthews

D



© Vaughan Matthews

E

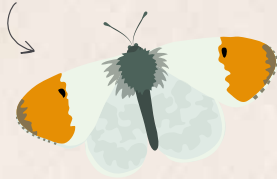


© Vaughan Matthews

Answers on the back cover!

Butterfly identification

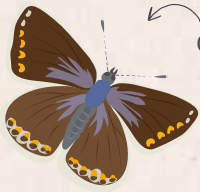
Orange-tip (male)



Brimstone (male)



Common blue (female)



Comma



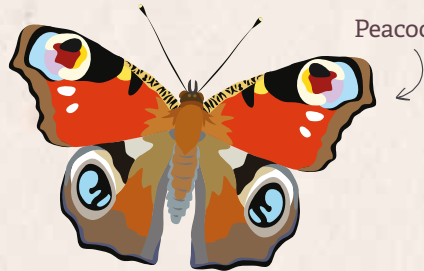
Red admiral



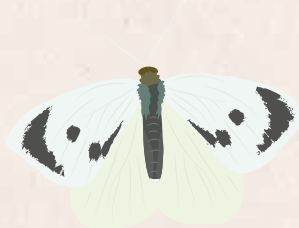
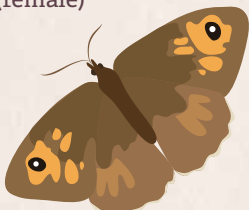
Painted lady



Peacock



Meadow brown (female)

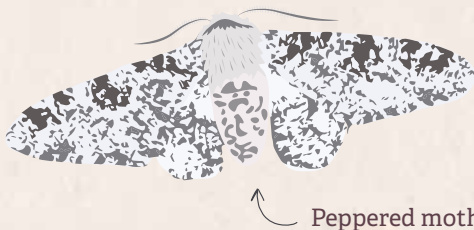
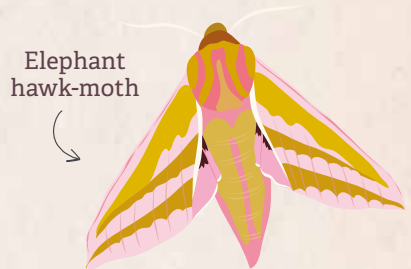
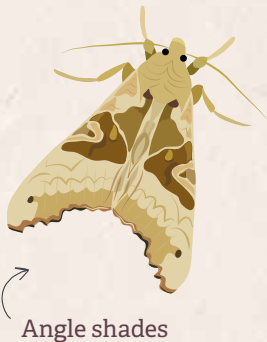
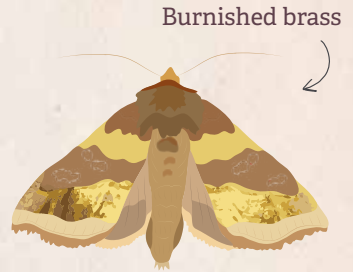
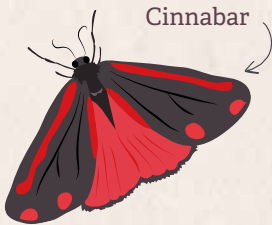


Holly blue (female)



Large white (female)

Moth identification



Illustrations not to scale

About Us

The Wildlife Trusts and the RHS set up Wild About Gardens to celebrate wildlife gardening and to encourage people to act for nature. Over the past 50 years we've seen declines in two thirds of the UK's plant and animal species. Many of our common garden visitors are increasingly under threat.

To discover more about wildlife gardening and what you can do to help at home visit us online.



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The Wildlife Trusts

We are a charity that believes that people are a part of nature; everything we value ultimately comes from it and everything we do has an impact on it. No matter where you are in the UK, there is a Wildlife Trust inspiring people about the natural world and saving, protecting and standing up for wildlife and wild places. More than 850,000 members support our work and help look after more than 2,300 diverse and beautiful nature reserves.

email: info@wildlifetrusts.org

Online: wildlifetrusts.org



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thewildlifetrusts

Registered Charity No 207238



Match the butterfly:
Small tortoiseshell - D
Peacock - E
Cinnabar moth - B
Brown argus - C
Large white - A

Cover image: Green-veined white, Jon Hawkins, Surrey Hills Photography

The Royal Horticultural Society

For more than 210 years, the RHS has been the force behind gardening in the UK. Our aim is to enrich everyone's life through plants, and to make the UK a greener and more beautiful place. We believe everyone in every village, town and city should benefit from growing – for stronger, healthier and happier communities.

email: communities@rhs.org.uk

Online: rhs.org.uk



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Registered Charity No 222879/SC038262



a sky original THE SECRET GARDEN

The Secret Garden, from the producers of Harry Potter and Paddington, is based on the classic children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett and stars Dixie Egerickx (Genius, The Little Stranger), Academy Award® and BAFTA winner Colin Firth (A Single Man, Bridget Jones's Baby) and BAFTA winner Julie Walters (Harry Potter, Mamma Mia).

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