

Wildlife Gardening: Butterfly borders

Recent research indicates that private gardens in Britain cover an area bigger than all of the country's nature reserves combined, estimated at over 10 million acres. Individual gardens may be small but they create important green links between urban nature reserves and the wider countryside, forming vital wildlife corridors.

The potential of the country's millions of gardens to help counteract some of the habitat losses that we have experienced in the last 50 years is enormous. Making your garden wildlife-friendly will help to ensure that the plants and animals that we value today will still be there for future generations to enjoy.

Do wildlife friendly gardens have to be wild?

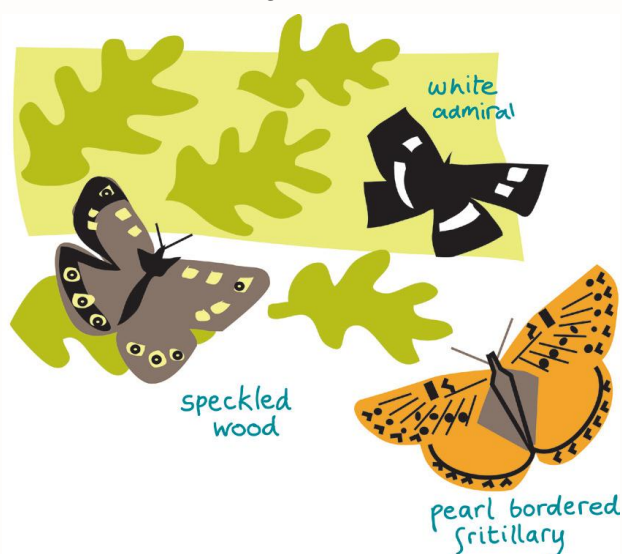
Gardening for wildlife can be either formal, with tidy edges, or more informal. You can devote a small corner to wildlife or your whole garden - depending on what is appropriate for you. Making space for nature in your borders will allow a variety of creatures to thrive, providing a balanced, living system which will encourage other wildlife to visit your garden - birds, bats and small mammals. They won't mind if your garden is tidy!

Butterflies in the border

In Hampshire we are lucky to have 46 different species of butterfly. However, the biggest threat to our native butterflies is the loss of natural habitat (meadows, hedgerows and woodlands) due to development.

Your garden could play a small but significant role in helping to reverse this trend. Most butterflies are very mobile - particularly the Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow that migrate to the UK from Europe each year - so they will find their way into a garden if there is something there to attract them. They are on the wing from March to October,

so growing suitable flowers during spring, summer and autumn will provide them with a vital food source, while you enjoy your garden.



Planning your border

When planning an area for butterflies, you need to ensure that there is enough of each flower to make a visible display and to give off enough scent to attract the species. Warmth and shelter is important too, so ensure that you place your plants out of the wind - in a sun trap if possible. Food plants for caterpillars should be included to support the butterfly during all phases of its life cycle.

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Plants that are best at attracting butterflies:

Spring: Aubretia (*Aubretia deltoides*), Honesty (*Lunaria annua*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Sweet Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*), Sweet Violet (*Viola odorata*), Wallflower (*Cheiranthus cherii*), Yellow Alyssum (*Alyssum saxatile*)

Summer: Buddleia (*Buddleia davidii*), Catmint (*Mentha mussinii*), Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), Heliotrope (*Heliotropium x hybridum*), Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Lavender (*Lavandula spicata*), Marjoram (*Origanum officinalis*), Thyme (*Thymus drucei*), Tobacco Plant (*Nicotiana*), Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*)

Autumn: Ice Plant (*Sedum spectabile*), Golden Rod (*Solidago virgaurea*), Helenium (*Helenium autumnale*), Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*), Sweet scabious (*Scabiosa atropurpurea*), Winter savory (*Satureia montana*)



Other plants for your wildlife border:

Nettles - these are the food plant for Small Tortoiseshell, Comma and Red Admiral. Grow nettles in an old pot buried in the ground to stop them spreading. Cut half the bed back in early June to provide a fresh crop of leaves.

Bramble - good for Wall Brown plus many other invertebrates and birds too. Growing it in a hedge will help to keep it under control. The fruit is also good for people!

Buddleia - the famous butterfly bush from China produces fragrant flowers which butterflies are attracted to.

Michaelmas Daisy - sometimes viewed by gardeners as a weed but provides a really valuable autumn nectar source.

Thistles - can be grown in a pot to control their spread. The food plant of Painted Lady and Brimstone, plus a nectar source for many other species.

Grasses - a whole variety support Meadow Brown, Hedge Brown, Wall Brown, Marbled White, Large Skipper and Small Skipper, so give the mower a rest and leave a corner of your lawn or the grass under trees unmown.

If you would like to **find out more** about how to encourage wildlife into your garden, please see the Wildlife Gardening pages of our website at <http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-gardening>.

If you have a question about wildlife you may find in your garden please contact **WildLine**, the Trust's free **wildlife information service** on 01489 774406 or Email: wildline@hiwwt.org.uk