

## Food plants for the larvae of garden butterflies continued

The caterpillars of the Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown and several other species feed on grasses including:

Smaller Cat's-tail	<i>Phleum bertolonii</i>
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>
Common Couch	<i>Elytrigia repens</i>
Annual Meadow-grass	<i>Poa annua</i>
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
False Brome	<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>

Several of these butterflies like long grass, so leave an area of grass which you cut once a year in late spring. You can increase the value of this area by planting meadow flowers such as:

Greater and Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i> & <i>C. nigra</i>
Common Restharrow	<i>Ononis repens</i>
Common Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
Kidney Vetch	<i>Anthyllis vulneraria</i>
Horseshoe Vetch	<i>Hippocrepis comosa</i>
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>

The Holly Blue has two generations, the first feeds on the flowers of Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) in the spring and the second on flowers of Ivy (*Hedera helix*) in the autumn.

To assist with identification of butterflies seen in and around Wycombe, we recommend you visit the website of the Upper Thames Branch of Butterfly Conservation ([www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk)), by following the link from the Wycombe Wildlife Group website. The Butterfly Conservation national website ([www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)), contains lots of information on gardening for butterflies, including designs for gardens, both large and small.

## Wycombe Wildlife Group

Among its activities Wycombe Wildlife Group surveys and promotes the management of wild habitats for the benefit of wildlife and advises on and promotes wildlife gardening.

Information about the Group can be obtained from the Group's web site at: [www.wycombewildlife.org.uk](http://www.wycombewildlife.org.uk)

## Gardens for Butterflies

With the loss of natural habitats due to urbanisation and intensive farming, gardens managed in a wildlife friendly manner are an important refuge for butterflies and other wildlife.

There are two aspects to 'Butterfly Gardening'; these are (i) growing plants that produce nectar to attract butterflies and other insects to pollinate them, and (ii) growing the food plants that the caterpillars (larvae) of the butterflies feed on.

Many of the caterpillar food plants are considered to be 'weeds', but without the caterpillars there won't be any butterflies. If you plant butterfly 'nectar' flowers you may attract butterflies into your garden but if they are unable to find food plants for the next generation to develop on, you may not see them again in your garden.

The best 'Butterfly Gardeners', therefore, not only grow plants with nectar-rich flowers to attract butterflies to their gardens, but they also provide a selection of caterpillar food plants - in the right setting! e.g. nettles, the food plant of the four commonest garden butterflies, will only be used by these butterflies if they are in a sheltered, sunny, situation.

The best butterfly 'nectar' plants are listed overleaf and in making your selection try to choose a range of plants that will provide nectar throughout the year. The early flowering (E) and late flowering plants (L) are very important nectar sources for the species that over-winter as adults. The autumn flowers help them build up reserves to see them through the winter and the early spring flowers help them replenish those reserves when they emerge from hibernation.



Butterfly-bush	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>
Hemp-agrimony (L)	<i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i>
Dame's-violet	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>
Marjoram	<i>Origanum vulgare</i>
Butterfly Stonecrop	<i>Sedum spectabile</i>
Lavender	<i>Lavandula spp.</i>
Red Valerian	<i>Centranthus ruber</i>
Field Scabious	<i>Knautia arvensis</i>
Michaelmas-daisy (L)	<i>Aster novi-belgii</i> & <i>A. novae-anglicae</i>
Aubrieta (E)	<i>Aubrieta deltoidea</i>
French Marigold	<i>Tagetes patula</i>
Fleabanes (L)	<i>Erigeron hybrids</i>
Garden Candytuft	<i>Iberis umbellata</i>
Honesty	<i>Lunaria annua</i>
Hebes (shrubby)	<i>Hebe spp.</i>
Garden Lobelia	<i>Lobelia erinus</i>
African Marigold	<i>Tagetes erecta</i>
Runner Bean	<i>Phaseolus coccineus</i>
Everlastingflower	<i>Helichrysum spp.</i>
Large-flowered Tickseed	<i>Coreopsis grandiflora</i>
China Aster (annual)	<i>Callistephus chinensis</i>
Wood Forget-me-not (E)	<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i>
Sweet-William	<i>Dianthus barbatus</i>
Mint	<i>Mentha spp.</i>
Rose Campion	<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>
Thyme	<i>Thymus spp.</i>
Escallonia	<i>Escallonia macrantha</i>
Canadian Goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>
Heather	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>
Primrose (E)	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
Wild Strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>
Greater and Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i> & <i>C. nigra</i>
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>
Winter Heliotrope (E)	<i>Petasites fragrans</i>
Chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>
Annual Woodruff	<i>Asperula orientalis</i>
Fox-and-cubs	<i>Pilosella aurantiaca</i>

Cuckooflower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>
Virginia Stock	<i>Malcolmia maritima</i>
Rock-cresses	<i>Arabis spp.</i>
Phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>
Bugle	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>
Wild Teasel	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>
Stonecrops	<i>Sedum spp.</i>
Thistles	inc. <i>Carduus nutans</i> (Musk Thistle)

### Some night-scented flowers to attract moths:

Common Evening-primrose	<i>Oenothera biennis</i>
Tobacco plant	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>
Night-scented Stock	<i>Matthiola longipetala</i>
Verbena	<i>Verbena x hybrida</i>
Broad-leaved Everlasting-pea	<i>Lathyrus latifolius</i>
Honeysuckles	<i>Lonicera spp.</i>
Privets	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> & <i>L. ovalifolium</i>

### Food plants for the larvae of garden butterflies

Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Comma and Peacock caterpillars:

Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Red admiral & Comma caterpillars will also feed on :	
Hop	<i>Humulus lupulus</i>

Large White & Small White caterpillars feed on :

Nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>
Wild Mignonette	<i>Reseda lutea</i>
Cabbages	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> and other Brassicas.

Brimstone caterpillars feed on:

Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>
Alder Buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>

Orange-tip and Green-veined White caterpillars feed on:

Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>
Cuckooflower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>