



HOW TO MAKE A

BUTTERFLY
FRIENDLY
GARDEN

WILD IDEAS



A small copper butterfly, resting on a flower

WHY ARE BUTTERFLIES IMPORTANT?

Butterflies (and moths) are huge contributors to pollination, and without them we would not have the variety of flowers, crops and trees we enjoy today. Pollination allows plants to reproduce and create more plants whilst also spreading their seeds further away, often creating a higher chance of survival for the plant as it has less competition.

Urban development means that we are taking up more and more land that was once green space for wildlife and nature, by creating a small safe space in our gardens for wildlife especially invertebrates we can help rectify the issue of lost biodiversity whilst getting to see some amazing wildlife from our own windows. By creating a small area in your garden for wildlife you are not only supporting local wildlife, but are helping to create a connected corridor of habitat for creatures to move around helping creatures move on migratory routes or even between habitats, which can be incredibly important for species such as butterflies who often live in different host plants from those they survived on as caterpillars. By doing your bit, you can support hundreds of species on your doorstep today!



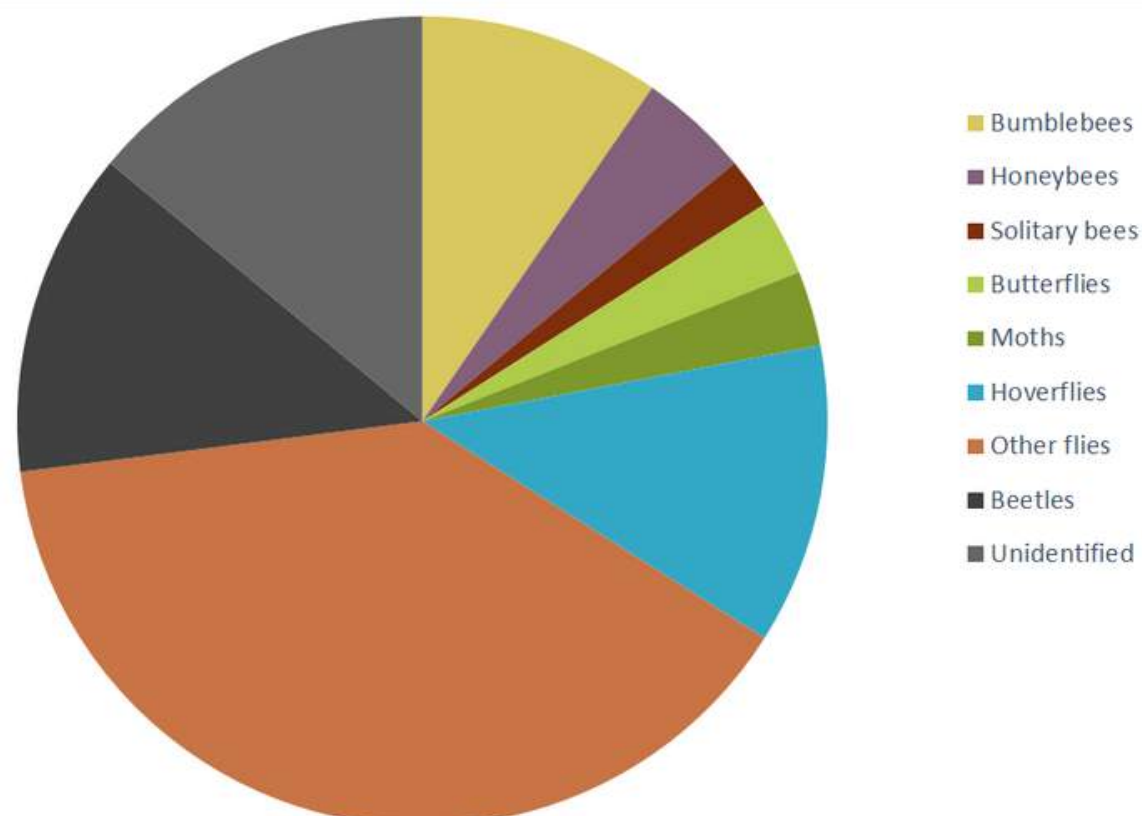
GARDEN LIFE

Gardens are becoming increasingly important in our landscape and if you happen to have a garden here are some easy steps to encourage pollinators to stop for a while! By simply allowing a diverse range of flowers, grasses and weeds (don't pull those dandelions up!) you will see more and more insects flying past your windows, and with more food species there may be more predator species such as birds and even frogs and toads!

You do not have to dedicate your whole garden to be a wildflower meadow - however it would be amazing to do so if you can, simply a small part of your garden can help provide rest and food places for the butterflies before they move on.

IT'S NOT JUST BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are not the only pollinators in the UK, there are at least 1500 species of insect pollinators in the UK many other species help pollinate our crops and flowers and in turn give us wonderful views and tasty food to eat. There is often more than meets the eye with pollinators, and the best way to support them is through the presence and abundance of flowers.



Here is a look at the pollinator proportions found from a citizen science survey from OPAL, showing results of a country wide survey period. Many different species will benefit from you supporting them with flowers and plants in your garden.

- Try to have a mixture of plants that flower across the year
- Keep some bushes and shrubs as they provide excellent food sources for caterpillars.
- Try to plant continuously so that the habitat is linked, for example a border of flowers or a large flower patch works great and helps your garden to look tidy.
- Don't use pesticides or harsh insecticides as you could poison your visiting butterflies rather than help them.
- When buying plants to create a garden, always try and pollinator friendly plants, and especially neonicotinoid free plants (a harmful pesticide that is fatal to insects, especially bees)
- Make sure any open sources of water have an escape route or raised surfaces within them to stop insects and mammals such as hedgehogs that are trying to drink from drowning.
- Have fun with it! It's your garden that should be made so that you can enjoy it along with the visiting pollinators.

THE BEST PLANTS TO USE

There's a lot of plants to choose from when creating a butterfly garden, here are some of the best butterfly attractors and some of the easiest plants to maintain, so your butterfly garden does not take too much time to maintain and support your local butterflies, which means more time to sit back and look at your local flora.

Our Top Plant Recommendations

We believe at Wild Ideas that supporting native species is very important, our local butterflies have evolved to thrive off of our native plants and so the best way to support them is to provide

- Lavender (smells great and attracts many butterflies)
- Marjoram
- Clover (Not over cutting your grass encourages plants and grasses like this that support butterflies)
- Ivy (good for butterflies and caterpillars)
- Honeysuckle
- Nasturtium (a wonderful food source for caterpillars particularly of the white family)
- Hebe (whilst not native, can provide pollen over winter for species such as the buff tailed bumblebee)
- It is also important to keep long grass and plants such as nettles that are important for many caterpillar species)

THE BEST PLANTS TO USE

We have created an interactive map showing where you can buy the best plants for a butterfly garden, these nurseries don't use harmful chemicals like neonicotinoids making it safe for pollinators.



seeds.wild-ideas.org.uk

Click the link to find your local nursery.

The best plants to use are local, native and pollinator friendly, if you are ever in doubt stick to local, independent run nurseries that will be able to tell you if they use pesticides on their plants.

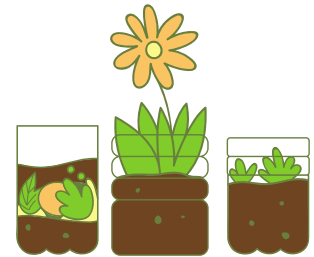
Even if you do not have a garden, for example if you live in an apartment, window sill planters or plant pots on balconies can liven up the space whilst also connecting habitats for butterflies, a simple window box might help more than you think

FLOWERS

Small plants that fit into a window box such as Ivy that does well in shade, or flowering plants like cornflowers will create a pretty and diverse flower box that you may see being visited by some pollinators.



If you don't have a flower box, or limited outside space, reusing waste such as water bottles (cut off the top and puncture a couple of drainage holes in the bottom and add some gravel or stones in the bottom to help drainage) are perfect to hold small flowers or some herbs.



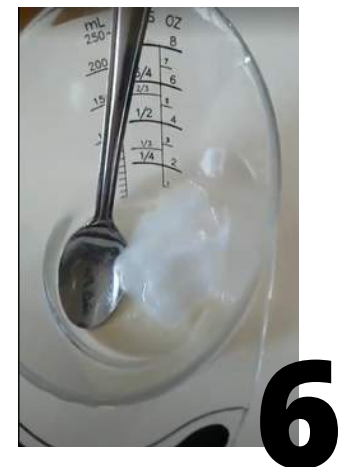
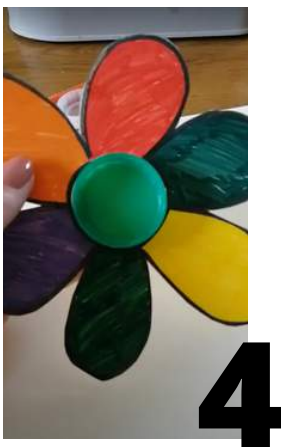
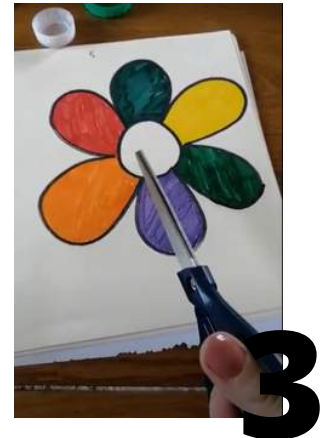
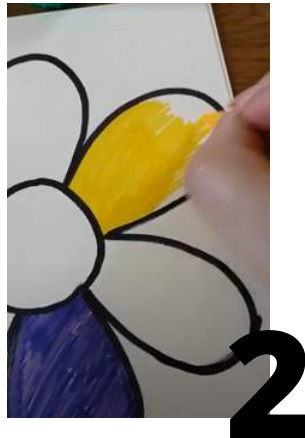
HERBS

Herbs are a great way to support butterflies and your cooking. A small herb box filled with plants such as Thyme, Rosemary, Lavender or Fennel can support caterpillars and butterflies, many herbs do not require constant sunshine and do great in areas that flowering plants may not. Just make sure you double check for caterpillars before cutting off any herbs before using



HOW TO MAKE A BUTTERFLY FEEDER

Sometimes in hard to navigate environments, butterflies become worn out and in need of nutrition to carry on their journey. This little DIY is great for helping the butterflies out especially in the hot weather where water and food sources can become sparse. Follow the instructions on the next page to make this butterfly feeder.




HOW TO MAKE A BUTTERFLY FEEDER

Sometimes in hard to navigate environments, butterflies become worn out and in need of nutrition to carry on their journey. This little DIY is great for helping the butterflies out especially in the hot weather where water and food sources can become sparse. Follow the instructions on the next page to make this butterfly feeder.

1. Draw a simple flower outline on some card or cardboard
2. Colour it in with bright colours or patterns
3. Cut the flower out
4. Attach an old bottle top to the centre of the flower using glue, tack or tape
5. Mix together 1tsp sugar and 50ml water until dissolved
6. Take a cotton ball or roll up some cotton wool and soak it in the sugar mixture until saturated.
7. Whilst the cotton wool is soaking, attach an old straw, chopstick, stick or other sturdy object to the back of the flower with tape.
8. Place the soaked cotton wool in the bottle cap
9. Plant the stick holding the flower into the garden, try and place it somewhere sunny or somewhere you see butterflies in your garden a lot.
10. Soak another cotton wool ball in sugar water to replenish

Remember: Butterflies rely on plants for nectar as their main source food, make sure you leave time between replenishing the wool to stop butterflies becoming dependent on sugar water, about 2-3 days or 1 day in hot weather.





Orange-Tip Butterfly (male)

GET INVOLVED



- Learning about butterflies doesn't have to be sitting in front of books and memorising them all, getting out and watching butterflies to become familiar with them is an amazing way to start to learn butterflies.
- Butterfly Conservation UK runs a Citizen Science project every year called the Big Butterfly Count, it's family friendly and suitable for all ages you can use their user-friendly app or website to access butterfly identification tips and a way to record the butterflies you may see when you're on a walk, make sure you know the location and keep count of what butterflies and how many you see.
- *If you do get involved in the Big Butterfly Count you can share it on social media and with your friends, it's a great summer hobby for all ages!*
- Check out and see if you have a local butterfly group and join for guided spotter walks and habitat restoration days.

- Learn how to identify British Butterfly species, learn about their habitat and distribution at [Butterfly Conservation UK](#)
- Check out your local bookstore for some Butterfly ID guides and enjoy watching and learning about your new visitors.

We recommend

- [Spot 50 Butterflies](#)

- [AA Butterfly Spotter Guide](#)

- Wildlife Watch.com has some great [spotter guides](#) for kids to print out and tick off, including insects.

- An easy to access photo guide by [John Walters](#)

- For more experienced butterfly watchers, [UKBMS](#) (UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme) provide the chance to walk transects and add data, or you could use their free data sheets to learn how surveyors perform transects.
- To get involved with local butterfly groups, [join](#) Butterfly Conservation UK, membership will automatically transfer to your local group, where you will have access to days out, meetings and a magazine.

SOURCES

Bradbury, K. and Butterfly Conservation (2020) *Gardening for Butterflies & Moths*. Cheltenham: Fellows Media.

Butterfly Conservation. (2020) *Get gardening*. Available at: <https://butterfly-conservation.org/how-you-can-help/get-involved/gardening/get-gardening> (Accessed: 28/06/20).

OPAL (2017) *8 things we've learned from the first year of the Polli:Nation survey*. Available at: <https://www.opalexplorenature.org/node/4688> (Accessed: 28/06/20).RSPB

RSPB. (2020) *Grow flowers for butterflies*. Available at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/growflowersforbutterflies/> (Accessed: 28/06/20).



THIS GUIDE WAS MADE FOR WILD IDEAS BY
WILD AT HOME VOLUNTEER