

Wild flowers and butterflies

Restoring wild flowers is the first step to restoring farmland wildlife. If nectar is restored, insects will revive and everything else further up the food chain. Butterflies are good indicators of insect health.

All butterflies need nectar and all the wild flowers in our mixes provide this. Both knapweeds, all scabious species, wild basil and wild marjoram are especially good. However not all butterflies will increase just by increasing the nectar supply. The food plant on which they lay their eggs and which the caterpillar eats also needs to be available. Some butterflies are somewhat choosy in this respect. **NOTE** both nectar and food plants are essential.

Butterflies which lay their eggs on meadow grasses

Meadow brown	Hedge brown
Ringlet	Marbled white
Small heath	Wall
Large skipper	Small skipper

Butterflies which lay their eggs on stinging nettles

Some nettles in full sun are required, preferably with 50% being cut in mid season, having made sure there are no caterpillars present.

Red admiral	Small tortoiseshell
Peacock	Comma

Butterflies which lay their eggs on specific wild flowers

If the food plants are not available, these butterfly species are unlikely to be around.

Brown argus – lay on cranesbill species.

Dingy skipper and common blue – lay on birdsfoot trefoil

Green veined white and Orange tip – lay on ladys smock/garlic mustard

Small blue – lay on kidney vetch.

Small copper – lay on common sorrel.

Shrubs used by butterflies.

Our native shrubs can make a huge contribution to insect diversity. Hawthorn, dogwood, guelder rose, wayfaring, wild privet, dog rose and field rose all produce good nectar. In addition, buckthorn is the food plant of the **brimstone** butterfly and holly (and ivy) is the food plant of the **holly blue**. These plants should be grown to full height and can be sited on boundaries.