



Activity Sheet: **Identify Butterflies**

Brightly Coloured Butterflies

These are the easiest butterflies; look closely, they all have different colours and patterns



Peacock

The eyespots on the wings are distinctive; they may confuse predators. A common garden butterfly. The caterpillars feed on stinging nettles.



Small Tortoiseshell

These common garden butterflies overwinter as adults, and frequently use our homes and outbuildings as hibernation sites. The caterpillars feed on stinging nettles, and when young live as a colony.



Comma

This woodland butterfly sometimes visits our gardens. The ragged edges of the wings make this butterfly easy to recognise. Once rare, it is now becoming more common.



Red Admiral

One of the most common and easily recognised garden butterflies, this strong flier is a migrant, arriving every spring from the continent. As well as feeding on nectar it is partial to juicy rotting fruit.



White Butterflies

These are the most difficult butterflies; to make things worse, sometimes the male and female are different. You need a close look to be sure which is which.



Large white

The biggest of the white butterflies, and a strong flier. The forewings of both sexes are strongly tipped with black. Only the female has black spots on the forewing., it is disliked by gardeners because the caterpillars love to feed on cabbages. .



Small White

This butterfly is common and is another pest of the vegetable garden. It is smaller than the large white and the black tips to the wings are smaller and less noticeable.



Orange Tip

Only the male has the easily recognisable bright orange wing-tips. The female has no orange patches and looks like a small white. Both male and female have a mossy green mottling on the underside of the hind wings which can be seen when the butterfly closes its wings (below).



Green veined White

This white is more common in farmland than in gardens. The adult is similar in size to a small white but the wing veins are darker, forming dark triangles close to the body.





Brown and Orange Butterflies



Speckled Wood

This butterfly lives in woodland, the males set up territories in sunny glade which they will defend against rival males. The caterpillars feed on a variety of grasses.

Gatekeeper

Often found alongside sunny hedges. It has bright orange patches and 2 tiny white spots within the black patch on the fore-wing.



Meadow Brown

The commonest butterfly in grassy places. The caterpillars feed on meadow grasses. It looks very like the gatekeeper, but it is larger and the orange patches on the wings are smaller





Other Butterflies

There are many other butterflies you might see, as well as some day-flying moths, here are some that might visit your garden.



Painted Lady

This butterfly is a migrant from North Africa, the numbers arriving in Britain varying from year to year. They lay their eggs on thistles and raise a brood over the summer, but none will survive the winter.



Small Copper

A small butterfly, it likes to bask in a sunny spot. The males are territorial.



Common Blue

Another very small butterfly, with brilliant blue wings. There are several other "Blue" species, which are hard to tell apart, but they are rarely seen in gardens



Brimstone

This is one of the earliest butterflies to appear in spring, having over-wintered as an adult. The male is a brilliant lime green, surprisingly this is excellent camouflage when it is at rest among green leaves. The female is much paler. The caterpillar feeds on the leaves of alder buckthorn



Garden Tiger

This is not a butterfly but a moth, which is active by day. The caterpillar is known as a wooley bear as it is covered in long dark hairs.