

## Garden Butterflies with Special Perennials: Peacock

One of my garden's showiest butterflies with its slow, strong wingbeats and those amazingly coloured "eyes".

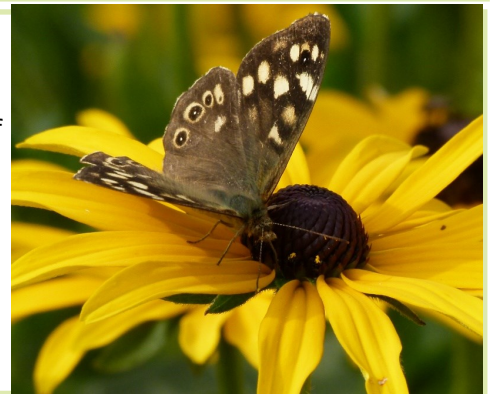
The caterpillars live on nettles (pictures shows one preparing to pupate). Adults can live for up to a year, hibernating through the winter in dry places like sheds.



## Speckled Wood

Increasingly common in my garden well away from any woodland this is a territorial butterfly that patrols sunlit areas in dappled shade chasing off other butterflies.

The caterpillars live on various species of grass.



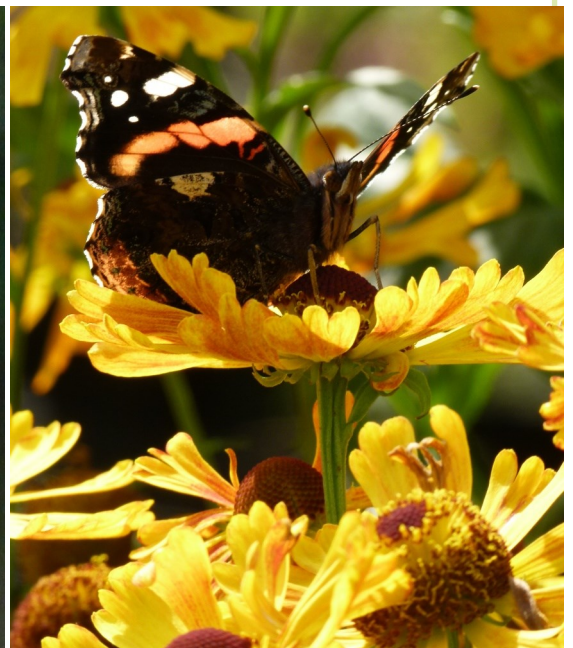
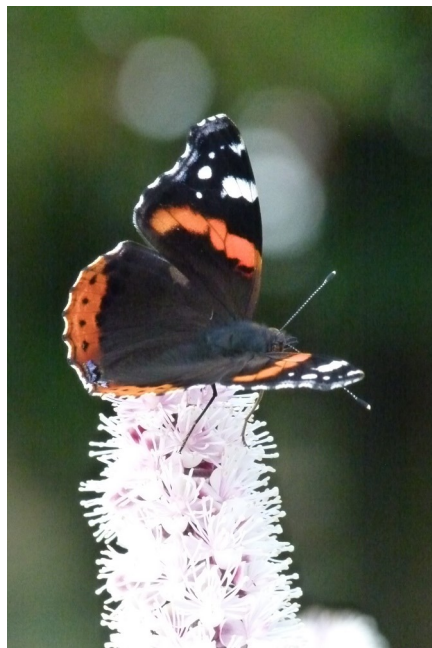
## Red Admiral

The name of this butterfly comes not from the sea or any supposed resemblance to any gaudy military uniform but from a corruption of its 18th century name of "The Admirable".

Most flying early in the year are migrants arriving from the Continent.

The caterpillars, like those of many of our favourite garden butterflies, feed on nettles: so there's every excuse for leaving a patch of nettles in even the tidiest garden.

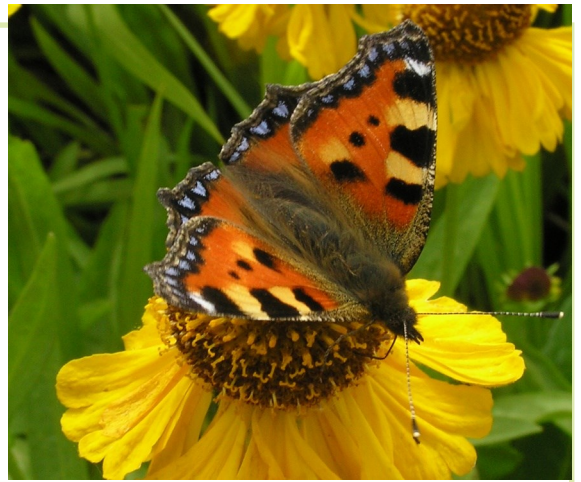
The favourite food plants of the adults include Joe Pye Weed (Eupatorium), Ice Plant (Sedum), Perennial Sunflower (Helianthus), Michaelmas Daisy (Aster) and of course, as pictured here, left: Bugbane (Actaea) and right: Heleniums.



## Small Tortoiseshell

This must be one of the most numerous Butterflies in our garden, with often clouds of them dancing over their favourite plants. They love Heleniums, Verbena bonariensis and all nectar-bearing flowers.

Their caterpillars also feed on nettles. The adults are capable of living through the winter by hibernating in dry sheds and garages so we often see them awakening on warm days in late winter and early spring.



## Small Copper

A member of the group of small butterflies that include the blues—actually with their wings closed the small copper and common blue are very similar.

The hairy caterpillars eat sorrel and dock—they are most welcome to all they can stomach in my garden!

The large copper became extinct in Britain in 1865.



## Gatekeeper

Any butterfly whose caterpillars eat couch grass is most welcome in my garden! Gatekeepers are one of the most abundant here loving all our perennials as well as flowers on the oregano in our herb patch.

The caterpillars hatch in August and hibernate through winter, pupating in June.



## Comma

This butterfly gets its name from the small, silver "comma" on the underside of the wings.

They are most common in our garden in late summer, although we do see adults that have hibernated flying in early spring.

The caterpillars feed on hops, nettles and currant bushes.

