

## What's in your garden?

Our local region is home to a diverse and fascinating array of wildlife and I wonder if you know 'what's in your garden' or what wildlife you might be able to attract. In this seasonal series I hope to share with you some hints and tips on how you can get involved in creating an environment, whether on a small or large scale, that will encourage local species to our villages. In each seasonal offering I will focus on a particular species and try to bring together information about events you can attend, plants you might consider and varieties you might spot in your own garden. I'd welcome your views on what might be covered in future articles planned for July, October and December. Please send your ideas to Martha at [m.kember@hull.ac.uk](mailto:m.kember@hull.ac.uk)

For the April issue butterflies are the chosen species; the Yorkshire butterfly conservation society suggests that nectar rich plants such as buddleia, lavender, mint, scabious and honeysuckle are ideal for attracting butterflies. So, whether you have a large garden or containers and window boxes, you can delight in seeing the holly blue, orange tip, comma, red admiral and many more.



Holly Blue



Orange Tip



Comma



Red Admiral

Butterflies visit gardens to drink nectar from flowers, the fuel needed to keep them airborne. Early flowers like pansy, aubretia, primrose and wallflower support butterflies as they emerge from hibernation. The late summer and autumn nectar plants including buddleia (the butterfly bush), lavender, marjoram, scabious, and thyme provide fuel for butterflies building up their reserves in preparation for winter. If you have a wilder area in your garden then consider this a way of attracting caterpillars, Stinging nettles, cuckooflower, alder blackthorn and garlic mustard are favourite plants.

### Top tips for attracting butterflies to your garden

1. Provide nectar throughout the butterfly season with spring, summer and autumn plants in sunny, sheltered areas. Plant original species as they produce more nectar than hybrids.
2. Grow some caterpillar food plants
3. Think about turning part of your garden into a mini wilderness
4. Try to avoid peat based composts and insecticides

How can I get the children involved?

1. Nature detectives are hosting a butterfly art competition which closes on 1 June 2009. See [www.naturedetectives.org.uk](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk) for more details
2. On Sunday 3 June 2009 Yorkshire Butterflies are hosting a 'Spring Butterflies' event at Fairburn Ings. Open from 11am go to [www.yorkshirebutterflies.org.uk](http://www.yorkshirebutterflies.org.uk) for further details
3. Visit the 'Insect Festival' on Saturday 4 July at York Museum Gardens – call 01904 687687 for more details