

A butterfly and bee border is a worthwhile addition to any school. As well as looking attractive, it will encourage a wide range of insect visitors, and these in turn can provide food for other wildlife including birds and small mammals. Carefully chosen native wildflowers, border perennials, seed-raised annuals, herbs and flowering shrubs can all make stunning displays alone or in combination and provide an important food source for bees, butterflies and other insects.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Foundation Stage

1,2,4,6

Art & Design

KS1 – 1ab, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

KS2 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

KS3 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

Science

KS1 – SC1, SC2

KS2 – SC1, SC2

KS3 – SC1, SC2

KS4 – SC1

Information & Communication Technology

KS1 – 1abc, 2abcd, 3ab, 4abc, 5abc

KS2 – 1ab, 2a, 3ab, 4abc, 5abc

KS3 – 1abc, 2ab, 3abc, 4abc, 5ab

KS 4 – 1ab, 2ab, 3ab, 4ac, 5abc, 6

HOW TO GROW a Butterfly and Bee Border from Seed

Brockhill Park Secondary School in Kent designed the bee and butterfly border for the Growing Schools Garden, growing most of the plants as annuals from seed.

The first step is to design the border, which needs to be in a sunny position, but can be any size and shape you like. Draw an accurate scale plan of the border and copy it so everyone can try being a garden designer.

Butterflies and moths feed on the nectar of many flowers but will lay their eggs only on leaves of specific plants which are their caterpillars' food. Bees collect nectar and pollen; beetles and other insects eat pollen. We've suggested some suitable plants, and you can find others in books on wildlife gardening. Seed catalogues and reference books will provide useful information on flowering time, heights and spreads, and colours of your chosen plants.

You can buy a range of seeds in garden centres, but mail-order companies have a far larger choice (see overleaf). Check the sowing times and any temperature requirements, then devise a growing timetable. It's best to start off all the seeds in containers as this gives much more control over the process.

Sow the seeds evenly, about 1 cm apart, in trays of damp multipurpose compost. Apply a light layer of compost to cover the seeds. Label the trays with the date, variety and student's name. Place in a propagator or cover with a clear plastic bag and leave on a warm windowsill.

Make sure that the seedlings have plenty of warmth and light, and water when required. Don't forget to make contingency plans for all holiday periods. Look daily for signs of growth and once the seeds have germinated, remove the plastic bag and grow on until the second set of leaves have developed – they are then large enough to prick out. Brockhill used half-size trays of multipurpose compost, and pricked out 20 plants into each. The young plants should be ready to go out when the leaves are touching in the tray. Harden off the trays of young plants by putting them in a coldframe or under a cloche for a week or two.

Prepare the border by digging and breaking down the soil into a fine tilth with a rake. With a large area, a powered cultivator may be needed – these can be hired at reasonable rates, or perhaps a parent may lend one. It can help to mark out the planting positions with sand, or by laying out all the plants on the ground before you start to put them in. Once planted, keep the border carefully weeded and protect the young plants from slugs. Enjoy the flowers as they grow and bloom, and keep a record of the visiting insects.

40 top butterfly plants

Annuals and biennials from seed

Alyssum, Aster
Bedding dahlias
Candytuft
Forget-me-not
French marigold
Lobelia, Honesty
Sweet rocket, Verbena

Border perennials and herbs

Aubrieta, Catmint
Marjoram
Michaelmas daisy
Mint, Phlox
Primrose, Red valerian
Rudbeckia, Sedum

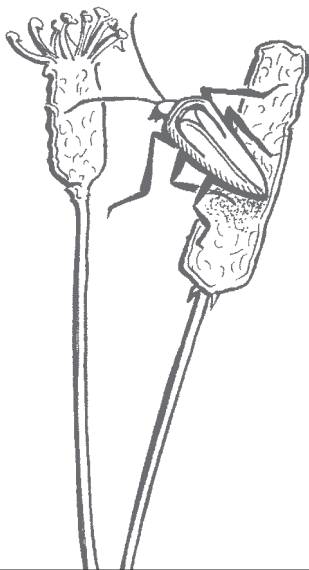
Flowering shrubs and climbers

Buddleja, Ceratostigma
Cotoneaster, Escallonia
Hebe, Honeysuckle
Ivy, Lavender
Lilac, Privet

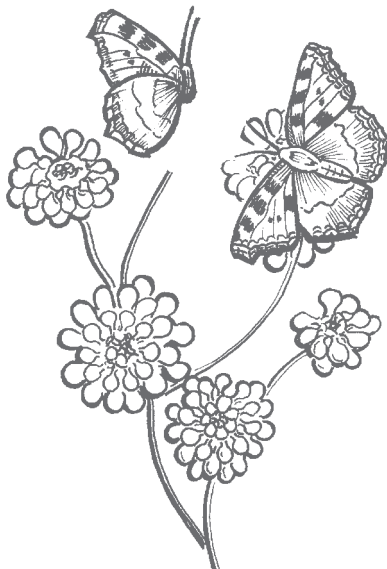
Wildflowers

Common fleabane
Daisy, Dandelion
Field scabious
Hemp agrimony
Ox-eye daisy
Knapweed
Purple loosestrife
Ragwort, Teazel

Soldier beetle on a plantain flower spike



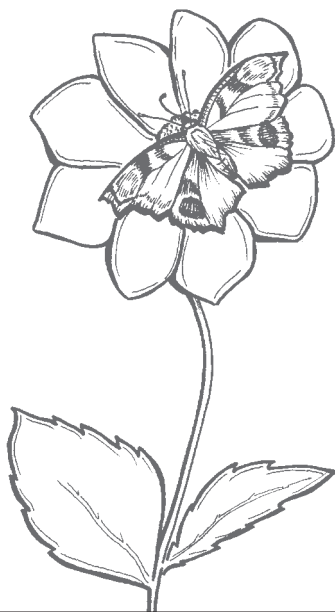
Candytuft attracts small tortoiseshell butterflies



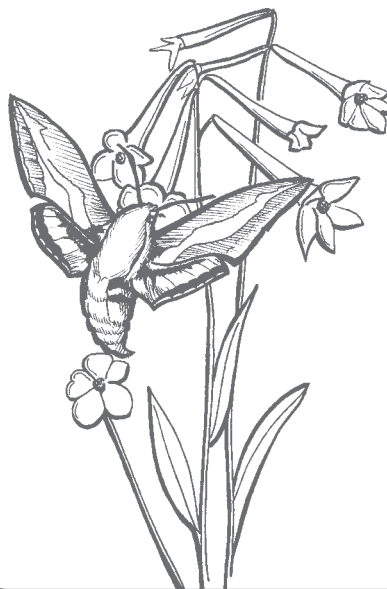
Lavender attracts bees



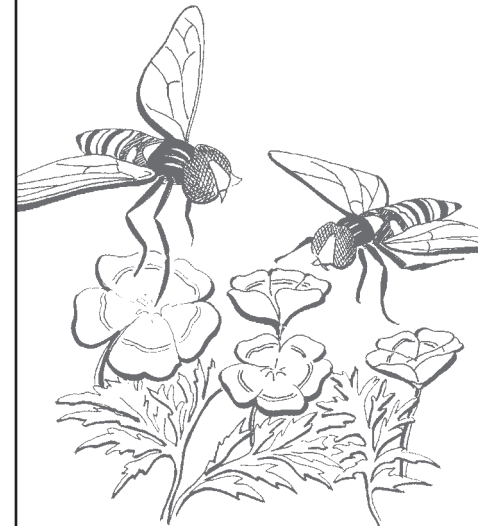
Bedding dahlias attract peacock butterflies



Nicotiana attracts hawkmoths



Poached egg plants attract hoverflies



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information on wildlife gardening: **CREATING A WILDLIFE GARDEN** by Bob and Liz Gibbons published by Hamlyn ISBN 0-600-56941-1. **HOW TO MAKE A WILDLIFE GARDEN** by Chris Baines published by Frances Lincoln ISBN 0 7112 1711 4.

Suppliers of seeds for bee and butterfly plants: **CHILTERN SEEDS** ☎ 01229 581137 www.chilternseeds.co.uk

DT BROWN ☎ 08456 014656 www.dtbrownseeds.co.uk

KINGS SEED ☎ 01376 570000 www.kingsseeds.com

MR FOTHERGILL'S SEEDS ☎ 01638 552512 www.mr-fothergills.co.uk

THE ORGANIC GARDENING CATALOGUE ☎ 01932 253666 www.organiccatalog.com

SUFFOLK HERBS ☎ 01376 572456 www.suffolkherbs.com **SUTTONS SEEDS** ☎ 01803 696363 www.suttons-seeds.co.uk

THOMPSON & MORGAN ☎ 01473 688821 www.thompson-morgan.com

UNWINS ☎ 01945 588522 www.unwins-mailorder.co.uk