

WALTHAM GARDENERS' SOCIETY

FOR WALTHAM AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES

Butterflies in your Garden **by David Harper** **Tuesday 11th April, 2017.**

David Harper, a lifetime butterfly enthusiast, provided an illuminating presentation with wonderful slides of over 25 of the most regular visitors to our gardens.

Butterfly numbers have been declining with intensive farming and the use of modern insecticides having a marked effect, but still there are numerous examples to be seen in your garden if you grow plants to provide them with nourishing nectar.

David had just returned from a visit to Dorset where he had sighted a number of firsts for the year.

For guidance on potential plants to attract butterflies David explained they see in Ultra Violet thus violet, blue and red attract them but there are exceptions depending on individual species liking for particular plants.

Brimstones are often seen early in the year as are Tortoiseshells. Commas like geraniums and Orange Tips favourite food can be found in Cow Parsley nectar whilst Green Hair Streaks favour the top of Oak Trees.

Denge Woods is a good sighting location with Speckled Woods and White Admiral to be found there in addition to those liking a little shade.

Many of the species found in U.K. hibernate over winter and emerge in the Spring to perpetuate the line. Brimstones, Peacocks and Red Admiral are typical of this. Whereas Painted Ladies hatch in the Sahara and make the journey north aided by high level winds.

Red Admiral can be found on Nettles and the Duke of Burgundy on Cowslips and Cow Wheat.

Other favourite locations to spot many species is The Military Canal or The Devils Needing Trough with the Small Copper on the sandy/gravelly upper slopes above Wye and the Holly Blue, Chalk Hill Blue and Adonis Blue being regular visitors.

Buddleia is a great shrub to attract butterflies and Berberis, Roses and Asters likewise provide abundant nectar. The only downside is large Whites being attracted to and feeding on cabbages, cauliflower and broccoli.

Without doubt David really knows his butterflies and provided an educational presentation.

The next Waltham Gardeners' Society event is the Annual Plant Sale on Saturday 6th May starting at 10.00 a.m. There will be a selection of plants and shrubs on display and everyone is encouraged to donate plants and shrubs for sale

especially surplus seedlings of flowers and vegetables to provide colour and comestibles for the coming summer.

In June on **Saturday 24th June** Sarah Morris, this year's expert judge, will be viewing the entrant's gardens for the **Best Kept Garden** competition and the **Prettiest Garden** competition. Now is your opportunity to make Sarah's decision making even more difficult by entering your garden. Everything from a small patio garden to an acre are worthy entrants, **don't be shy**.

We look forward to seeing you at 10.00 a.m. on Saturday 6th May at Waltham Village Hall for the next event.