



May Theme Butterflies



In *Lettuce and the Butterfly*, Lettuce has never seen a butterfly and has to work out how to find one. The sense of wonder of seeing a beautiful butterfly flying is shared by adults and children alike. A good chance to look at the wonderful world of butterflies.

Try the activities below or some of your own.

Activity One: Butterfly Life Cycle

Help children to understand the amazing life cycle of a butterfly. Each child will need 2 paper plates or two circles of card, and a paper fastener. One of the circles should have a triangular window cut out of it covering roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the circle. The other circle should have faint lines drawn on to divide it into four quarters.

On the circle with no window, the children should draw (or cut, stick and colour) pictures of a butterfly egg, a caterpillar, a chrysalis and an adult butterfly, one picture in each quarter of the circle, clockwise around the circle.

Then fix the other circle on top with a paper fastener, and the children can turn the window round to show the different stages and learn what the stages are called. They can draw a beautiful butterfly and their name (or the name of their butterfly) on the top circle.

Using books or magazines showing real butterflies will show them the real variety of creative patterns they could pick for the wings and the caterpillar colours.

Activity Two – Butterfly Snack Time

Butterflies use a long proboscis, like a curling tongue, which reaches from their mouth and into the folds of the flowers to get the nectar to eat. This activity is a fun way for children to practice doing the same.

You can use a plastic cup for each child, plus a strip of clean flexible plastic such as a food bag with the seams cut open to make a long rectangle. Fold the plastic into a strip about 5-7 cm wide and then roll the strip up. Then put the roll into the cup, so you are looking at the end of the coil like looking at the end of a Swiss roll. There will be lots of air spaces between the strips of plastic. Pour some sweet fruit juice - something like mango juice - into the cup. Then the child should use a drinking straw to suck the juice from in-between the coils of plastic. Encourage them to do this in short sips like a real butterfly. Explain that this is like a butterfly trying to find the nectar in-between the petals.

A variation is to use 1 cm of set jelly in the bottom of each cup and the children can try to poke between the 'petal' plastic coil to scoop out the jelly with a lolly stick.

Activity Three – Make A Butterfly Haven

A bigger project - make a butterfly holiday park in your garden. If you don't have a planting area, use a big pot or window box. Get the children to help by finding out which plants attract which butterflies, drawing a plan, planting the seeds or transplanting bought plants. When the garden is established you can encourage them to log the butterflies who visit. If you have a veggie patch, don't encourage the cabbage whites too much unless the butterfly haven is a fair way from the vegetables!

A list of suggested plants for caterpillars and butterflies is on the next page.

Making A Butterfly Haven

Butterflies like warmth so pick a sheltered and sunny spot for your butterfly plants.

Plants for Caterpillars

Butterfly type	The caterpillar likes...
Painted lady	Thistles, asters, hollyhock
Red admiral	Nettles, hop
Small tortoiseshell	Nettles
Peacock	Nettles
Holly blue	Gorse, ivy
Common blue	Clover, trefoils
Large white / cabbage white	Cabbage plants, nasturtiums
Orange tip	Honesty, watercress, wild mustards

Plants for Butterflies

Spring flowering	Summer flowering	Autumn flowering
Forget me not	Marigolds	Michaelmas daisy
Violas	Buddleia	Golden rod
Honesty	Hebes	Sedum
Lavender	Marjoram	
Primroses	Sunflower	
Catnip	Verbena	
Sweet William	Wild cornflower	
Bluebells	Chives	
Pansy	Honeysuckle	
	Thyme	

Wild area plants

If you have a big enough outdoor area to leave some wild plants for the local wildlife, here are some plants which are great to encourage for butterflies:

- Nettles
- Dandelions
- Thistles
- Comfrey
- Cowslip
- Brambles
- Privet
- Grasses
- Mallow