

GARDENING

BRINGING BEES, BUTTERFLIES & BIRDS TO THE GARDEN

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Bees, butterflies, birds, and insects play a really important role in getting your garden to thrive. They pollinate flowers, fertilise plants, and keep our eco-system in check. Create a habitat they'll love and in return they'll work hard for you.

WHY?

As pollinators, bees, butterflies, and insects transfer pollen from one flower to another, fertilising our plants so they can start forming fruits and seeds. Bees pollinate 70 of the top 100 most popular food crops, and they pollinate 80 per cent of all flowering plants on earth.

Unfortunately wildlife, especially bees in some parts of the world, are under threat due to climate change, parasitic mites and poor farming practices. Habitat degradation also takes away flowers, which supply nectar and pollen, their essential food. Bees are now dependent on humans to protect them, so it's important we do all we can to attract them to our gardens, and help keep them alive.

HOW TO

As gardeners, we can all help to increase their populations. This guide will help you create the best conditions for our natural wildlife to help attract birds, beneficial insects, bees, and butterflies to your garden.

MAKE AN IDEAL HABITAT

A layered garden is an easy way to attract native wildlife:

- Ground cover is best for insects that bury under the mulch and leaves.
- Bees and butterflies like the mid layer bushes and shrubs to nest and hide in, and flowers to feed on.
- Trees provide the canopy, which gives protection to birds, and much needed shade.

ATTRACTING BEES

Attracting bees to your garden is a great way to keep your garden healthy and vibrant. Here are some ways to bring them buzzing in:

- Plant generous clusters of the same species for wow-factor and bee appeal.
- Plant flowers for each season, for a steady source of nectar and pollen all year round for the bees. Here are some bee friendly flowers:

Summer:	rosemary, nasturtiums.
Autumn:	pansies, anemones.
Winter:	calendula, camellias.
Spring:	lavender, marigolds.

- Avoid hybrid varieties of flowers and plants as they often lack the nectar that birds and bees are looking for.
- Flowers with good landing platforms are great, as are tubular flowers with nectar at the base.

Wild Flowers.

- Wild flower seed collections are an easy way to bring colour to your garden and attract beneficial bees and butterflies. This is simply a self-contained combination of seeds, food, and mulch. The seeds have all been chosen for New Zealand soils and climates, and have staggered flowering to act as a constant food source. To plant simply prep the soil, shake to scatter the seeds, and water.

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- Bees need water to survive, so have a shallow water source available.
- Don't spray when plants are flowering or bees are present as the pesticides can kill them. Where possible, opt for organic solutions like pyrethrum, and as a rule, only spray early morning or evening when the bees are asleep in their hive.

Companion planting.

- If you have a vegetable garden then mix in some flowers that bees love - yellow, blue, and purple colours are best. Marigolds, lavender and nasturtiums, for example, will attract bees, help pollinate your veggies, and increase your harvest.
- Chives help to repel slugs, snails and aphids. These are good to plant alongside tomatoes, potatoes, brassicas, and carrots.
- Coriander is also a great deterrent for aphids.
- Pests also tend to infect flowers first, before moving on to your veggies.

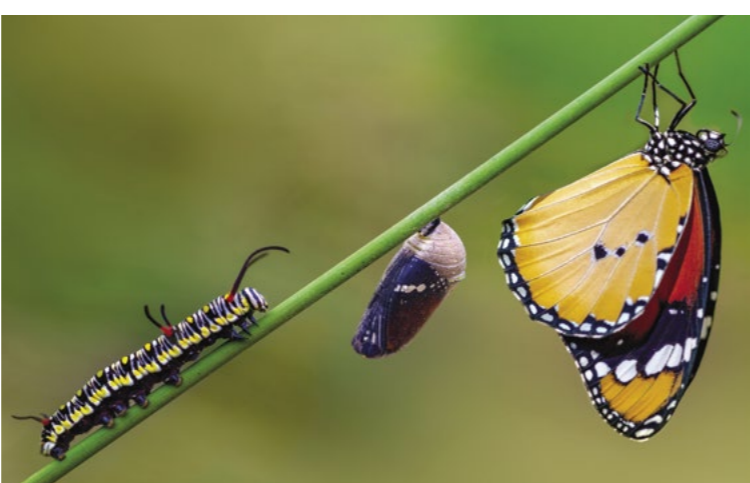


ATTRACTING BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are easy to keep happy. The Monarch is the main butterfly in New Zealand, and by planting swan plants in your garden you'll be sure to see them.



- It's a good idea to plant them in pots so you can move them into sheltered areas, and manage the caterpillar population.
- Plant in spring, in a sunny spot, so the plant has a chance to grow to a reasonable size.
- Turn over the leaves check for eggs. You really only want 2-3 caterpillars per plant otherwise they won't have enough to eat.
- Make sure the plant is well watered and cleaned from caterpillar poo – they do a lot of eating!
- Once they've hatched place netting over them so you know where they are in the garden. You don't want them to make their cocoon somewhere unsafe.



ATTRACTING BIRDS

- Birds (and insects) are attracted to flowers because they produce sugar (nectar) and protein (pollen), which is the basis of their diet. If you can create a garden with flowers blooming throughout the year, it may even encourage wildlife and birds to set up a home in your garden permanently.



- Having water in your garden is a good way to attract wild and native birds. A birdbath will give them a place to have a drink and a paddle. An elevated birdbath will also help them to feel safe from any predators like cats. Make sure that the water is shallow enough for birds to stand in so they can clean their feathers. You should also clean it out regularly so that the birds avoid picking up any water-borne illnesses or diseases.



- You can also use a nectar or bird feeder to attract birds.



- The more native plants you have in your garden, the more birds that you can attract. These include: gum trees, wattle, acacias, banksias and grevilleas.
- Hybrid varieties of flowers and plants aren't great for birds, as a lot of them don't produce nectar.

ATTRACTING INSECTS

- There are hundreds of beneficial insects in the garden and only a handful of harmful ones.
- Ladybugs eat aphids, so are great to have on hand. Like bees they also feed on pollen, so flowers like marigolds are great.
 - Herbs like dill and fennel attract pests, so adding them to the garden will give your ladybugs plenty of food to eat.



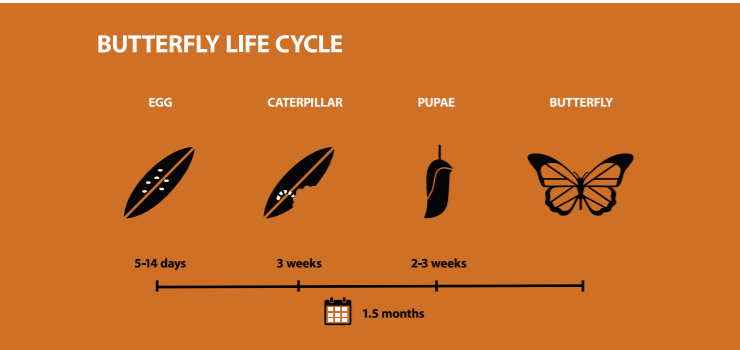
The lower level of the garden also houses worms and other beneficial bugs

- Add mulch around the base of your plants to attract them.
- Leaf litter from pruning and mulching your own native tree waste is a great source of mulch.

Grow a mixture of plants to attract a balanced mixture of insects.



- Try not to handle the caterpillars or butterflies, as they are very fragile.
- As with bees, a wild flower seed collection is a great way to attract butterflies.



CATERPILLAR LIFECYCLE

- From egg to butterfly takes about a month and a half.
- In spring female monarchs lay eggs on the underside of a leaf, which take 5-14 days to hatch.
- Once hatched, caterpillars eat non-stop for around 3 weeks. Make sure you keep your swan plant watered so it's in good shape for them.
- Next, the pupa stage. This takes 2 – 3 weeks and you should keep them out of direct sunlight while they are in their cocoon.
- Finally the butterfly emerges. They usually come out mid morning, and will wait for their wings to harden before they fly off.
- Kids love watching the lifecycle of a butterfly, so it's a great way to get them involved in the garden.