



Butterfly City

Established in 2019, Butterfly City is supported by West Hull and Haltemprice MP Emma Hardy, Yorkshire Branch Butterfly Conservation, and a range of local voluntary groups and businesses, including Pickering Community Orchard, Constable Street Allotments, Mires Beck Nursery, The Deep, The Land Registry and Reckitt Benckiser.

Buckthorn and the Brimstone

Alder Buckthorn, *Rhamnus frangula*, is a hardy, fast growing and versatile small tree and requires little maintenance once established. It is the foodplant for the caterpillars of a large yellow butterfly the Brimstone *Gonopteryx rhamni*.

This is a mobile butterfly that can easily find isolated trees within an urban environment and increasing the number of Buckthorns will increase the number of butterflies. It is also host to other species of moths and butterflies and its copious small flowers are highly attractive to bees and provide a vital nectar source. The increased availability of caterpillars benefits the chicks of nesting birds.



Buckthorn planting can be undertaken on an individual, community or corporate level and provides a manageable and hands-on teaching resource for schools. This means it can bring together all parts of the community in a common goal, create new connections and a greater appreciation of nature within an urban environment.

The first Buckthorn “giveaway” took place in November 2019. Around 1,300 plants were distributed to individuals, community groups and schools through a series of pick up points in community spaces or delivered by volunteers. A folded, colour A4 leaflet which contained care instructions and information on the Brimstone butterfly and caterpillar the plant would attract.

In spring 2024 Reckitts provided funding to purchase another 2,100 which were successfully distributed through our network. We have sourced all our Buckthorns from Mires Beck Nursery, a local not-for-profit enterprise who employ and support adults with learning disabilities. Previous to our collaboration, Mires Beck did not grow and supply Buckthorn. Now they include 10% in their hedgerow mix.

Gardens for Butterflies

Butterfly City have produced a set of information leaflets on plants that can be grown in gardens and small spaces which butterflies found in Hull need for their caterpillars to feed on. We run stalls at events through the summer where children can decorate pots and then plant seeds of butterfly foodplants to take home and eventually plant out in their own spaces.

Land Registry Meadow

Butterfly City is now in its second year of partnership with The Land Registry in creating a wildflower meadow on its Park Street premises capable of supporting breeding habitat for butterflies.

The project involves employing a simple, cut-and-remove mowing regime on amenity grassland on site. Allowing the sward to grow has seen an impressive range of flowering plants to appear, including foodplants for eleven species of butterflies found in Hull. Six different species of butterflies were recorded in the first year, five of which had foodplants growing in the meadow. The site has two large signs which explain the purpose of leaving the area uncut for lengthy periods which are a vital part of increasing public understanding and acceptance of the 'tangle' associated with biodiverse meadows.

