

Some common butterflies of Fletcher Moss



The **Meadow Brown** butterfly can be seen in large numbers on the hay meadow in summer spreading its wings to bask in the sunshine and weaving around amongst the flowers and grasses where it lays its eggs. It is the commonest butterfly in Britain. You're most likely to see this butterfly in late July to the end of August. If the spots, positioned towards the end of its wings, are seen by birds the butterfly can flash its wings and escape with no more than a peck.



The **Peacock** is a common garden visitor where it loves the flowers especially buddleia. Look for it in Fletcher Moss Gardens flower beds. It lays its eggs on the undersides of the nettle plant. It is practically invisible when it settles on a tree trunk and if a predator comes near it can flash its wings to scare them off with its large patterned 'eyes'. It is one of the longest living butterflies and can survive up to 11 months. In winter it hibernates in crevices and holes in trees.



A **Comma** butterfly has lovely brown patterned, ragged wings designed to be camouflaged on leaves when its wings are shut. It is one of the butterflies you are likely to see in Fletcher Moss Park and Gardens especially from mid July. It has become more common in the last thirty years probably because it has adapted to laying its eggs on nettle leaves. It likes feeding on the nectar of blackberry plants which you'll find round the edges of the park and woods.



The **Red Admiral** is a colourful butterfly which can be spotted in different parts of the park. It is quite common on the marsh thistles at the edge of the hay meadow near the river. This is a butterfly of late summer and is attracted to the flowers in Fletcher Moss, especially buddleia and windfall apples. It lays its eggs on nettles and the caterpillar feeds on nettle tops where you can see the leaves spun together and the caterpillars living inside the little tent of leaves.



One of the commonest butterflies of early spring is the **Orange Tip**. This picture is of the male which has the orange tips to its forewings; the female has grey where the male has orange. It lays eggs on the Garlic Mustard, Cuckoo Flower and Cow Parsley plants, all found round the edge of Fletcher Moss Gardens and in the meadows. Birds don't like this butterfly to eat because it has a strong taste of mustard which it gets from its main food plant, the Garlic Mustard.



The **Speckled Wood** is on the wing from February to November with a peak in August and September. It depends on the woods to thrive and in warm weather you can see it patrolling the hedges and the edges of Stenner Woods; it likes to sunbathe in the patches of light between the trees. This butterfly lays its eggs on grasses which the caterpillars eat. There are colonies of these butterflies living in Stenner Woods.



The **Brimstone** is an easy to spot, attractive yellow butterfly. This is one of the first butterflies of the year to appear. Watch out for it on the first warm days of Spring and through April and May when it flutters along the hedges and Stenner Woods. You can also see it in Fletcher Moss Gardens in summer where it gorges on nectar in any flowers to stock up for its winter rest.



The **Holly Blue** is one of the most beautiful butterflies of the area and is commonly seen in Fletcher Moss Gardens and the woodland from April to June and from late July to August. True to its name it depends on holly and ivy plants to feed and lay its eggs. You'll see it fluttering around near holly and ivy plants which are plentiful round here.