

## Hoggers

by Hoggers, 26-Dec-12 06:16 PM GMT

There was a time during this Summer when my garden seemed to be full of butterflies: I had Holly Blues



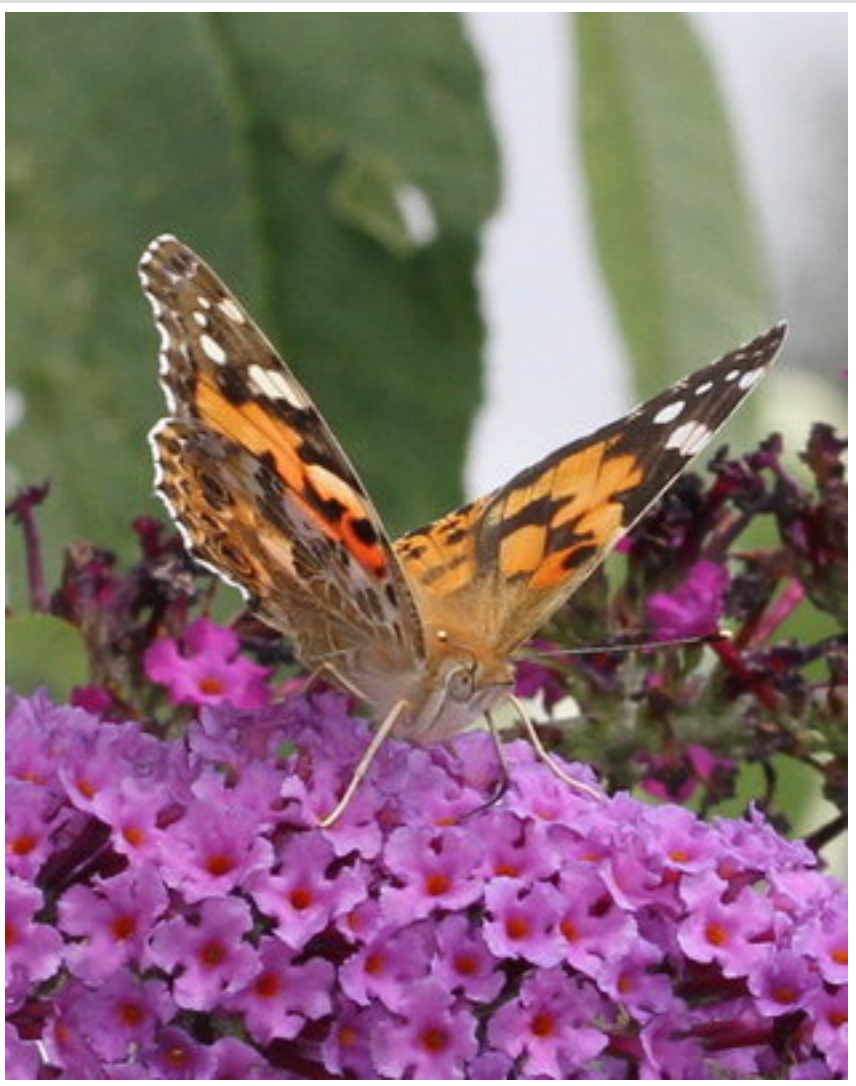
Peacocks



And Commas and Red Admirals on the windfall plums



A Painted Lady stayed for a week



But for me the highlight of this Summer was the return of Small Tortoiseshells in numbers that reminded me of when I was a boy



This was the view I had nearly every day from my living-room



The four Buddleias in my garden were very popular and I found myself wishing I'd planted more.

In late September a friend showed me around a plot of land that is ear-marked for development. He pointed out a large number of wild Buddleia that had sprouted up in the short time since the land had been cleared. This gave me an idea and with his permission I dug out ten of them and transplanted the lot into my garden. I am no gardener but I hoped the near indestructible quality of this bush would go half way to cancelling out my Horticultural Ignorance. As you can see, they appear to have survived the change in venue



I also collected a few other "weeds" such as Ragwort and Thistle



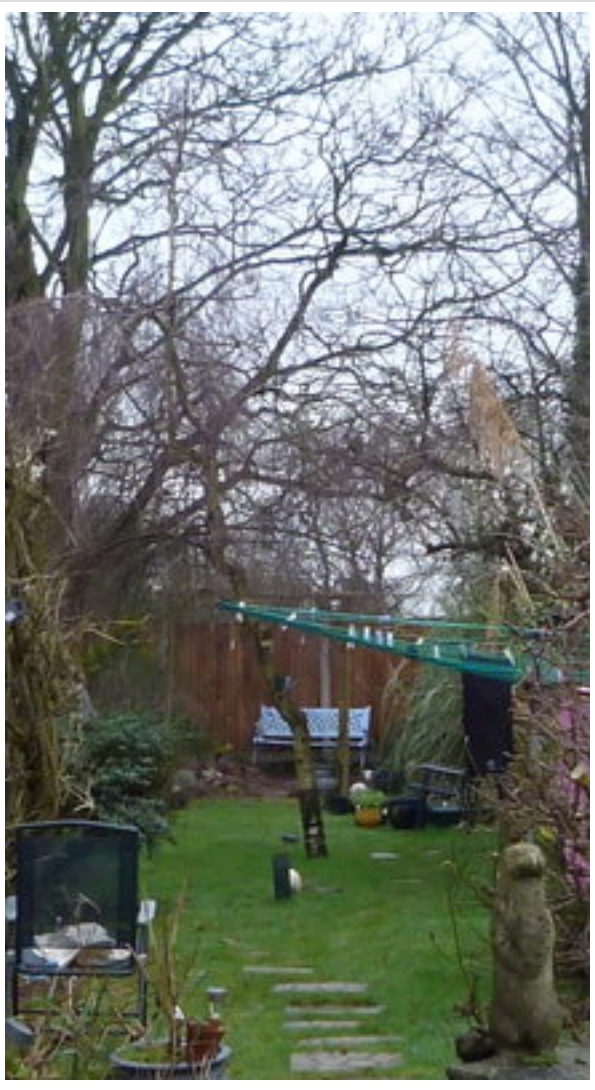
which too have survived replanting ( probably because they are Invincible ! )

I also have a Nettle which sprung-up of its own accord



All of this activity started my rusty brain thinking: Why not try to plant a Butterfly Garden?

Here is a view of the top of my garden



which gets a lot of sunshine.

And here is an area of lawn that I hope to convert into a more Butterfly Friendly flower bed



Over the last couple of months I have been buying plants



In these pots I have Lady's Smock



, Garlic Mustard, Greater Knapweed, Ox-Eye Daisy, Asters, Bugle



Bird's Foot Trefoil



Dog Violet



Devil's Bit Scabious and Valarian



I also bought myself a seed mix of Wildflower and Grasses, all of which i will pop into the mud come Spring and keep everything crossed !  
Whether my fingers get any Greener and how the Butterflies get on in my garden next year, this Diary will tell.

### Re: Hoggers

by Mark Colvin, 26-Dec-12 06:42 PM GMT

Good luck Hoggers.

A definite inspiration to those of us who also do not possess green fingers ... 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by ChrisC, 27-Dec-12 01:46 AM GMT

all i can say is .... the very best of luck hoggers. you won't regret it.

Chris

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 27-Dec-12 11:53 PM GMT

I never thought I'd hear myself say this but this afternoon I dug a flower bed



I tried getting my Dad to come around and dig it for me but he muttered something about being retired and that I'm thirty years younger than him. He did however offer plenty of advice : which way up to hold the spade, only go a spade's depth, turn over the grass so it will act as compost, that the wind, rain and frosts of Winter will break down the mud thus making planting in Spring easier etc. Thanks Dad.

I must admit that I rather enjoyed digging up the first spade full or two : it felt Manly.

But my enthusiasm (and my back) quickly began to strain thereafter. I subsided into a near-by garden chair (by far my usual gardening occupation) all but exhausted. One look, however, at my pots of little plants all waiting there for me to provide them with a new home reinvigorated me. I set to work again



And even unearthed a Neolithic Toothbrush



So at least I have made a start on my Butterfly Garden. Many thanks Mark and ChrisC: I get the feeling that I have embarked on an Adventure!

## Re: Hoggers

by David M, 28-Dec-12 04:13 AM GMT

Looks like a very therapeutic experiment this, Hoggers.

Good luck with it.



## Re: Hoggers

by Susie, 28-Dec-12 06:49 AM GMT

Take it easy with the digging and look after your back. You're doing stirling work. Itt will only be a few months and you may see butterflies coming to that flower bed. 😊

## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 28-Dec-12 05:54 PM GMT

Thanks very much for your encouragement guys. I think you've gone to the heart of it Susie : gardening is about looking ahead. At the moment all I've got is a lot of mud that after last night's rain is more like a World War One trench than a flowerbed. But Spring and Summer are not so far away and by that time I hope I'll have flowers with lots of Beautiful Butterflies come to visit.

P.s. My back is Killing Me!

## Re: Hoggers

by Susie, 28-Dec-12 11:17 PM GMT

Listen to your back. I used to dig a lot, but used to over do it and now I cant dig at all. It's a right nuisance

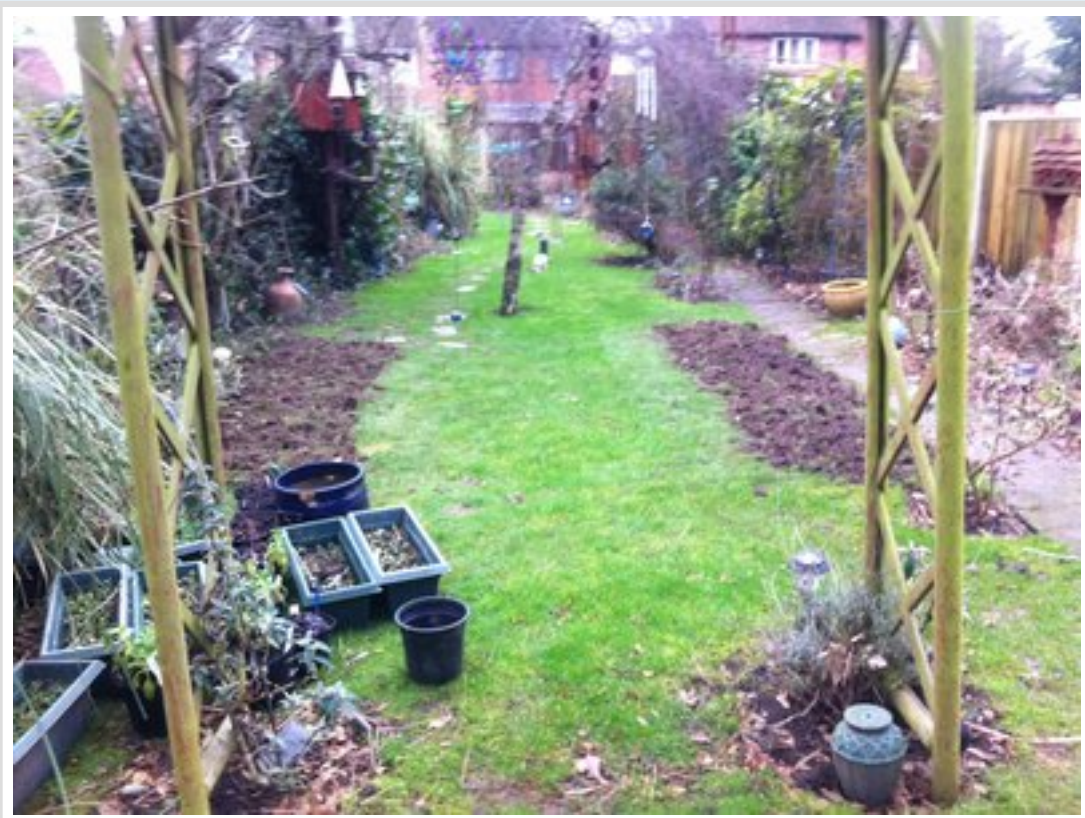
There are already snowdrops in flower, spring and the first orange tips are only a few months away.

On the upside I can wield a trowel like a demon so have taken inspiration from your diary to start planning next year's garden planting. 😊

## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 29-Dec-12 10:38 PM GMT

I was determined to devote some time over this Christmas Holiday to getting underway with my Butterfly Garden, making a start with the first flowerbed. Well, after a day of rest, this morning I dug a second (on the left as you look at this picture )



The idea being that on Summer afternoons I will do nothing more strenuous than sit on the lawn watching butterflies flitting over my head between the two flowerbeds. Well, now at least, I'm a step closer to making this dream a reality.

With all the rain we've had recently I feared the soil would be water-logged, but that's not the case here ( I'm in Ashford, Kent ) and it was easy to work with.



I do however feel rather squeamish about Worms! It's not them, you understand, but accidentally slicing them in two when digging that I'm uneasy about. It reminds me too closely of "Ring of Bright Water". Poor Mij! I cried buckets when I saw it as a kid and I don't think I've ever got over the shock. I don't like to kill or injure living things and I like Worms – where would my garden be without them? Credit where credit's due.

But then I suppose every time I walk across a meadow I must cause damage in one way or another. Maybe I'm worrying too much. I did try to avoid the Worms as much as possible when digging.

Anyhow, I've dug my two flowerbeds. My next job will be to tidy up the edges and then I can wait for Spring and get on with some planting.



## Re: Hoggers

by Susie, 30-Dec-12 01:45 AM GMT

It is good that you're considerate but you can at least take consolation in the fact that every time you cut a worm in half there is probably a hungry beedy eyed robin not far behind waiting for his dinner.

## Re: Hoggers

by David M, 30-Dec-12 03:19 AM GMT

Whilst seemingly not particularly wide, your garden is far longer than most other people's. Your images are quite envy-inducing. I can just imagine you next July lying on your lawn surrounded by all kinds of insects.

Do any of your neighbours grow insect-friendly plants/shrubs?

## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 30-Dec-12 04:00 AM GMT

Spot on David – the garden is narrow but long. The house is 1930's and I think they were more generous with the land in those less crowded days. In fact a few years ago some neighbours were selling off the bottom half of their gardens for housing. My garden is quite long established: I've some fairly old trees, Ivy, Holly etc but although I love it, up until now I've done next to no work on it. As for my immediate neighbours, sadly no; they keep lawns but little else. Susie, you're quite right: my Robin is looking very Happy!

## Re: Hoggers

by ChrisC, 30-Dec-12 04:16 AM GMT

it looks like you have a seating area at the back, is the lawn used between the flower beds or could you make them wider? the only reason i ask is because you have alot of plants to find homes for there and you'll need the space. it's amazing how much room these plants take up.

I suggest a path wide enough for a tripod 😊😊

## Re: Hoggers

by Susie, 30-Dec-12 05:20 AM GMT

Instead of grass in between the flower beds you could have birds foot trefoil for common blue and/or creeping time for other insects. A flat mowed lawn is over rated in my opinion 😊

## Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 31-Dec-12 03:21 AM GMT

Good luck with this Hoggers, looks like you have got some good plans there.

I shall follow this with interest 😊

Neil F.

## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 31-Dec-12 04:26 AM GMT

Thanks everyone I appreciate all of your support. For me it's literally breaking new ground as I have no gardening experience beyond mowing the lawn. Fortunately there are good websites and the garden centres themselves are happy to give advice. I must say that buying plants is addictive! I think you're right Chris, I will need to enlarge the beds although I want to keep a lawn pathway in between big enough for a deck chair and a drink's table...

## Re: Hoggers

by ChrisC, 31-Dec-12 04:56 PM GMT

Hoggers, I was and still am pretty clueless when it comes to gardening, back in 2001 i decided to not garden for butterflies as such but planted 2 borders with native/naturalised wildflowers. this was my first garden having lived above shops most of my life. The book that got me started was the 2000 edition of "Gardening with Wild Plants" by Julian Slatcher. it was more about making the garden look good with the plants rather than wildlife

value but it certainly gave me a good start. by 2004 and a few orders from naturescape i had the borders full of wildflowers and full of all manner of insects. By the sounds of it, where you are situated is ideal for this, an oasis in a built up area.  
here is my old garden ("weed patch" as the neighbours used to call it) back in 2004



the record that i know of for that patch was 21 butterflies of 5 different species at once. with over 20 species visiting in all including singles of small copper and clouded yellow (my only essex skipper picture was taken on the lavender). I can't enthuse or encourage enough for everyone to try this. i found it a life changer. it'll be trial and error for a while once you find out which plants are better than others and may i suggest supporting any taller ones as i find they tend to flop.

## Re: Hoggers

by Susie, 31-Dec-12 08:25 PM GMT

I hope Hoggers is as motivated by the picture of ChrisC's garden as I was when I first saw it, I had always liked a cottage garden look but it motivated me to plant for wildlife too.

## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 31-Dec-12 10:10 PM GMT

That's a lovely photograph Chris,thanks, and just what I want my garden to look like in the Summer.

It's pouring with rain as I type this but it wasn't so bad this morning. I continued digging to make the flowerbeds bigger and now I think I've got them just about big enough. I'll see how it goes.





I've got some more plants coming including Lavender, Yarrow and Marjoram together with more Valerian, Aster and Ox-Eye Daisy. I'm looking forward to getting them planted.

Happy New Year Everyone!

### **Re: Hoggers**

by Susie, 01-Jan-13 04:50 AM GMT

Get some vebena bonariensis. It's great for late season butterflies.

Happy new year 😊

### **Re: Hoggers**

by essexbuzzard, 01-Jan-13 05:09 AM GMT

And also Erysium Bowles Mauve. It flowers virtually all year and is a hit with the Nymphalids. Be sure that the site gets as much sun as possible in Spring and Autumn,as well as Summer.Sometimes people forget this. Sadly,my garden gets no sun at all by September,and therefore no butterflies.