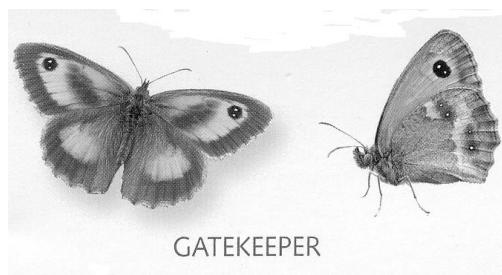


Summer 2009

I am writing this in early August as the interminable rain and wind has finally given way to sunshine and the garden has suddenly burst into a flurry of butterfly life.

The buddleias, hebes, verbenas, scabious, oregano and hemp agrimony (and ragwort too) are all adorned with the bright jewels of freshly emerged Red Admirals, Peacocks, Painted Ladies and a few Small Tortoiseshells. When they are not feeding they bask on the paths and you have to be careful not to tread on them. There are also Small, Green Veined and Large Whites – not so welcome for the cabbages and nasturtiums but offering a contrast to their gaudier cousins. And dotted amongst their larger relatives are the Gatekeepers – the males are smaller and brighter with a dark mark on the forewing and the females somewhat larger. They both have a diagnostic dark spot containing two white dots on the forewing.



In the scruffier corners are a few Meadow Browns and the odd Common Blue, and a few days ago we even had a Comma - we don't often see one of these in the garden. In shadier places the Speckled Woods hold territory in their selected sunny spots and in the drier places there are Wall Browns. Whirring low down amongst the flowers are Silver-Y Moths – a day-flying moth which is an annual immigrant like the Painted Lady and very common.

It is a wonderful sensation to walk around the garden surrounded by so much butterfly activity - you can even hear the wings of Peacocks as they fly past. It was well worth investing in all those nectar-producing plants!

Rosemary Royle