

#SavingSpecialSpecies

Looking for violets

Surveying wildflowers in support
of endangered butterflies



EAST DEVON

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Looking for Violets Survey

Violets are the crucial larval food of the threatened and declining Pearl Bordered and Small Bordered Fritillary Butterflies.

The Pearl Bordered caterpillars feed solely on Common Dog-violet, whilst the caterpillars of the Small Bordered Fritillaries feed on Common Dog-violets and other violet varieties.

By learning where this vital food-plant is plentiful, and possibly recording butterfly sightings, we will know where to focus future conservation efforts.

Please help us find where the violets grow in East Devon

Find the survey form here: <https://forms.gle/UPzBD5VrMVnZaN3Y7>



Pearl Bordered Fritillary

It's one of the earliest butterflies to emerge and is also known as the 'April Fritillary'.

Its appearance in spring coincides with the greening of the woods, with their floods of bluebells, violets and primrose, and birds in full song.

Sadly, a loss of habitat has contributed to its demise – needing open glades in woodland where overwintering caterpillars can feed on Common dog-violet.



Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary

The Small Bordered Fritillary (SBF) is very similar and it's very hard to tell them apart.

Both have distinctive spots or 'pearls' on the undersides of their wings, but the SBF is more contrasted, with a few extra spots as well as being smaller.

Its population is larger than the Pearl Bordered as it also occurs in grassy marshy places as well as woodland edges and glades.



Pictures Iain Leach

Help us find the violets in East Devon

They are mainly found in deciduous woods and along hedge banks and verges on country lanes. This is where we would you like to look. Please look out for dog violet in your local woodlands and let us know if you see either of the pearl-bordered fritillary butterflies fluttering nearby.

Coppicing

Violets thrive in wood that is coppiced. Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management, which cuts back trees to the stump or roots to encourage new growth - and creates woodland clearings, before new shoots emerge.



Bracken and open glades

The adult Pearl Bordered and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary butterflies need:

- woodland clearings, usually in recently coppiced or clear-felled woodland
- or well-drained habitats with mosaics of grass, dense bracken and light scrub

They seek out bracken to rest and sun themselves on.

Look out for the butterflies in these areas whilst searching for violets.



Three types of Violet to look out for:



Common dog-violet



Marsh Violet



Heath dog-violet

Common dog-violet

- Our commonest violet
- Behind the 5 petals is a spur which is white in colour and notched with sepals which are pointed and have large square cut appendages
- Flower 15 -25mm wide
- Heart shaped leaves arising from a central rosette
- Flowers March - May , July - September

Sepals - outer whorl of floral leaves (usually green) surrounding the petals of a flower.

Rosette – rose-like group of leaves at the base of a plant.



Marsh Violet

- Pale lilac petals with dark purple veins
- Smaller flowers than Common and Heath Dog-violets 10-15mm wide
- Blunt unnotched spur
- Kidney shaped leaves on long creeping runners
- Likes damp and acidic places, such as wet woodlands, bogs and marshes
- Flowers April – July
- It's the food plant of the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary



Heath dog-violet

- Pale lilac petals with dark purple veins
- Flower 15 -25mm wide
- Blunt unnotched cream coloured spur
- Oval lance shaped leaves
- Will be growing in heathland areas
- Flowers May - June



Finding your grid reference

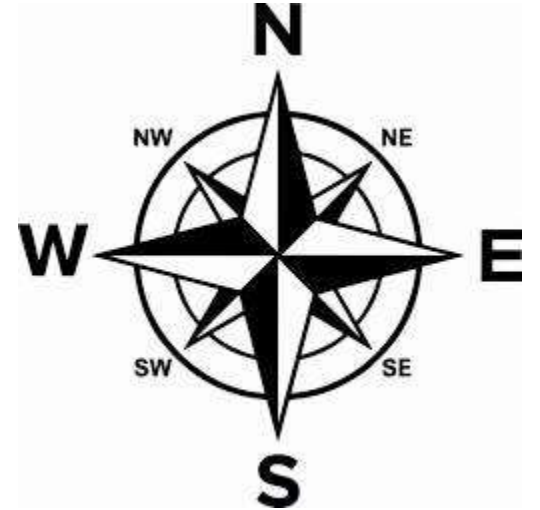
On the Pearl Bordered Fritillary [habitat map](#), click on your chosen footpath and a 6-figure grid reference will be shown.

Alternatively, useful tools for finding the grid reference for your survey location include osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk and gridreferencefinder.com

Recording Aspect

Aspect is the compass direction that an object faces – are the violets growing in an area facing North, East, South or West.

Compass Smart phones have a compass that you can use. Stand with the violets behind you – and see where the pointer on your compass is pointing.



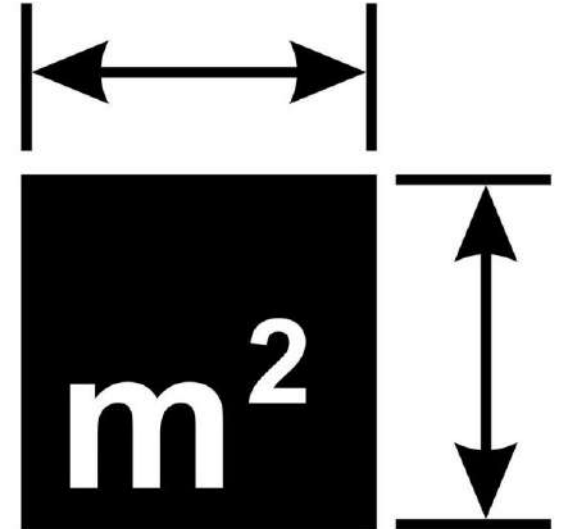
Describing the size of your search area

If you can give a rough idea of the size of your search area in metres or feet (e.g. if you searched along a footpath), or square metres/feet if your area is larger, please do.

However, if you're not used to using the measurements above, it can sometimes be tricky to describe the size of an area.

It might be easier to describe your search area using a well-known object or area as an example, e.g.

- the size of a supermarket basket
- the size of a supermarket trolley
- the size of a supermarket parking space
- the size of half a tennis court
- the length of a bus



Dominant Tree Species

Try using these woodland trust ID cards to identify the trees in your search area – click to link



Woodland Trust Nature Detectives

Get twiggy with it!
Will you spot these sticks on your travels?

Twig ID

Ash	Beech	Hawthorn
Field Maple	Horse Chestnut	Blackthorn
Birch	Rowan	Larch
Alder	Oak	Sycamore
Elder	Lime	Dog Rose
Hazel	Lilac	Elm

How're your detective skills? Did you find them all?
Feel free to copy and share this for personal and educational use – and don't forget there are loads more brilliant nature facts to download on our website: woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives 020232215201 naturedetectives@woodlandtrust.org.uk
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Woodland Trust Nature Detectives

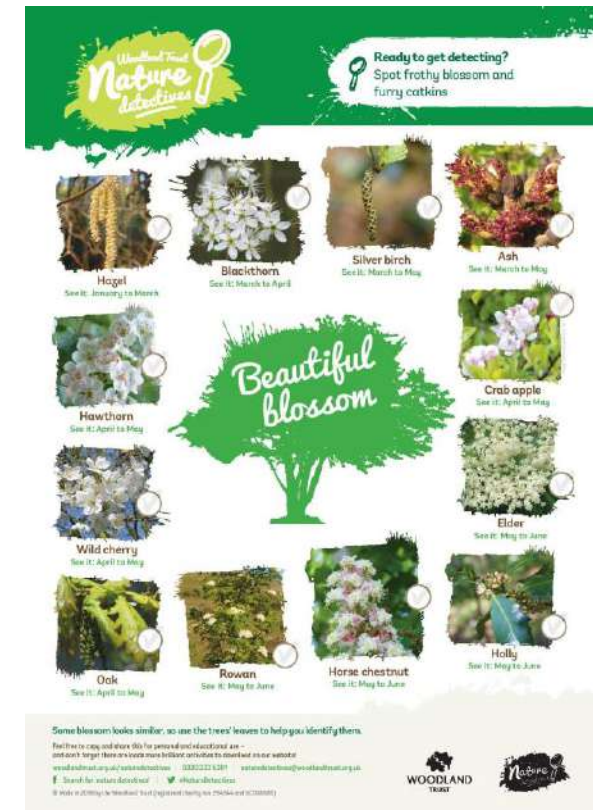
Be a super spotter!
How many trees can you identify?

Leaf ID

Alder, Beech, Oak, Sycamore, Birch, Holly, Field Maple, Hawthorn, Horse Chestnut, Hazel, Rowan

Found any other leaves? Do you know which trees they're from?
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Ready to get detecting?
Spot frothy blossom and furry catkins

Beautiful blossom

Hazel, Blackthorn, Silver birch, Ash, Hawthorn, Crab apple, Wild cherry, Elder, Oak, Rowan, Horse chestnut, Holly

Some blossom looks similar, so use the trees' leaves to help you identify them.
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Dominant Scrub Species

Typical scrub species are:

1. Hawthorn
2. Blackthorn.
3. Bramble
4. Willow
5. Gorse, and
6. young Birch.



#SavingSpecialSpecies

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Pearl Bordered and Small Bordered Fritillary Butterflies are one the elusive eight species East Devon AONB are focusing attention on as part of their Saving Special Species Campaign.

For more information on the butterflies:

[Pearl Bordered Fritillary](#)

[Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary](#)

Spot and record your butterflies – download the free Butterfly Conservation app for recording the butterflies you see. [Find out more.](#)

For further information on our species recovery project, contact our Wildlife Engagement Officer: Ruth Worsley – SavingSpecialSpecies@gmail.com

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