



# Gwent Wildlife Trust

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## Greater Butterfly Orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*

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### Species information

**i** **Common name**  
Greater Butterfly Orchid

**Latin name**  
*Platanthera chlorantha*

**Category**  
Wildflowers

**Statistics**  
25 -- 60 cms tall. Flowers  
1.5 --3 cm across

### About

A distinctive orchid of hay meadows, open scrub and grassland, it is as often found in ancient woodlands as in grasslands, especially along rides and in clearings and along woodland edges. It also grows on chalk.

### How to identify

Has a single spike up to 60cm tall with significant number of whitish to yellow or green flowers, each with spreading sepals and petals. The lowest petal of each is long, narrow, yellowish green and undivided. Has large pair of broad, shiny, elliptical [and spotless] basal leaves. May be confused with lesser butterfly orchid - examine the pollinia [mass of pollen] . Greater has 2 narrow yellowish green strips side by side just below the hood, 3-4 mm long, about 1.3mm apart at their tips and 4mm at their base. Lesser are closer together and parallel.

### Where to find it

Old hay meadows



## When to find it



## How can people help

Old hay meadows and unimproved grasslands are under threat and the UK has lost over 97% of its unimproved hay meadows. The Wildlife Trusts own and manage many such reserves and promote sympathetic management with private landowners and organisations to protect and expand other such sites. By joining your local Wildlife Trust you can help them to continue this work.

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