

# BREEDING BUTTERFLIES In the Classroom

When breeding butterflies they must be housed in such a way as to provide the necessary environmental conditions. Therefore the basic requirements of air, moisture, temperature, food and cleanliness must be taken into consideration.

## HOUSING

Wooden box housing can be appropriate so long as it enables adequate circulation of air. They must also be high enough to accommodate a reasonably sized foodplant (see right).

However, probably the most practical form of housing is shown right. This is constructed by creating a framework, using two or more wires. Netting is then placed around the wires, thus providing all round ventilation.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

**AIR:** The housing should enable good ventilation and free circulation of air.

**TEMPERATURE:** The position of the housing should provide conditions of normal daily and seasonal fluctuations. It must be ensured that the housing is not sited where it could experience extremely high daytime temperatures. A position which is exposed to strong winds is also ill advised.

**MOISTURE:** Care must be taken in ensuring that the interior of the housing is never wet, as this rapidly promotes mould and fungus disease. However, it must also never be totally dry, as this will hinder development and cause the foodplant to wither.

**FOOD:** If you use naturally growing foodplants then they should be grown in a pot of a suitable size. If however, you use cuttings, then they should be kept in some other suitable water container. However, taking care in blocking the mouth of the jar with cotton wool, to ensure that no larvae can fall into the water and drown. It is also important to remember that you must have the right plant to suit each species.

**CLEANLINESS:** Make sure that a layer of newspaper, or kitchen tissue covers the base of the housing, in order to catch the droppings (frass). Ensure that the paper is replaced daily, as accumulation of frass could cause disease.

