

Butterflies on our Nature Site, and providing habitats for them

compiled by Liz Yeats using Butterflies of Britain & Ireland by Jeremy Thomas & Richard Lewington.

Butterfly photos courtesy of Butterfly Conservation

Please refer to diagrammatic plans.

- **Butterflies needing short-ish flowery meadow. (6inches +):** Mow late Oct to end March.

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*



eggs laid on Horseshoe vetch, Kidney vetch, Black medic birds foot trefoil & other legumes. Need lush plants.

Caterpillars tended by ants.

Chrysalis: late April & July.

Adult: May to late Oct.

Chalk hill blue *Polyommatus coridon*



eggs laid on Horseshoe vetch, shortish but not cropped.

Caterpillar April-June.

Adult flight: July-Sept.

Small Blue *Cupido minimus*



They need Kidney Vetch flowers to both feed & lay eggs.

Eggs laid on flowers during June, 2nd brood Aug-Sept, becoming caterpillars after 1-3 weeks. They grow as caterpillars feeding on Kidney Vetch flowers in sun, with sparse ground cover. By July caterpillars are in cracks in soil and under moss.

Chrysalis: early May & late July.

Adults emerge from mid-May to mid June.

Cut/mow: March then Sept to Nov. Rake with care.

Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*



eggs laid on grass (Sheep's fescue & others), short sparse sward June and Sept.

Caterpillars live low to ground eating at night.

Hibernates over winter.

Chrysalis May & Aug.

Adults: May to June & Aug to Oct.

- **Butterflies needing taller plants or specific plants:**

Mow: July, then Sept & Oct, 4inches. Hay-meadow management

Small copper *Lycaena phlaeas*



Eggs laid: on tall sheep's sorrel common sorrel 10-30cms high. 3 broods: May – June; Aug; then Oct.

Caterpillar: hatch after one week. Warm sheltered site, sparse vegetation.

Overwinters as chrysalis on the ground, possibly tended by ants for approx. one month.

Adults: late April till end Oct, as 3 broods. Cut/ mow: April - mid May.

Painted lady *Vanessa cardui*



Migrant from Europe. Any flowery habitat but esp thistles to lay eggs which hatch after one week. Three broods May till Oct.

Caterpillar May to Oct.

Chrysalis for two weeks.

Adult seen: early May till late Oct.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*



Eggs: on short fine grasses, (Meadow bents, Ryegrasses) July-Sept.

Caterpillar: Aug to following May low to ground, hibernates colder months then feeding at night.

Chrysalis: suspended low down on grasses May to July.

Butterfly adult : from June to end Sept.

- **Butterflies needing taller/ lush flowers and scrubby grasses:**

Mow: every 3 yrs only in rotation. (Tussocky scrub areas -green)

Skippers



Lay eggs: late June to end Aug on rough tall grasses, esp Yorkshire fog, Cock's foot, Timothy, Tor grass, False brome, Purple moor grass.

Caterpillars live July to following May in leaf blades, with winter hibernation.

Chrysalis: 3 weeks May to June.

Adults: May to Aug.



Large skipper *Ochlodes sylvanus* - above

Small skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris* - left

Orange tip *Anthocharis cardamines*



Lay eggs May & June, on Cow parsley, Garlic mustard, Ladies smock and other Cruciferae (cabbage family).

Caterpillars: May to beginning July. They utilise the mustard alkaloids to develop acrid tasting bodies (protects them from birds). Need food plants within 1m of hedge or woodland edge in full sun. Hibernates in bushes or tall vegetation.

Chrysalis: for 10 or 11 months (July to April) in bushes

and tall vegetation.

Adults: April to June.

Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*



eggs July & August. On lush and uncut grasses

Caterpillar in grasses for 10 months, some hibernation.

Chrysalis June & July at base of grass clump.

Adult: late June to mid Aug.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

Eggs: on short fine grasses, (Meadow bents, Ryegrasses) July-Sept.

Caterpillar: Aug to following May low to ground, hibernates colder months then feeding at night.

Chrysalis: suspended low down on grasses May to July.

Adult: June to end Sept.



- **Butterflies needing trees and shrubs or woodland edges and uncut grass at edges;** (Tussocky scrub areas -green and woods/ hedges)

Management: Occasional tree thinning to allow dappled light. Keep brambles cut. Leave grasses uncut.

Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni*



eggs (May & June) laid on alder buckthorn & purging buckthorn in sun and out of wind.

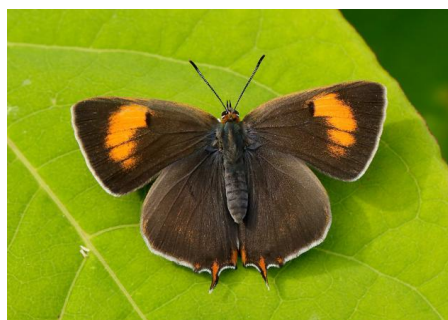
Caterpillars: feed on buckthorn leaves until pupation when they leave to find other plants.

Chrysalis: mid July to Aug.

Adult: Aug to following Feb, hibernating as an adult in woods esp under ivy. They first appear again in early March till following Feb with two peaks on first warm

days in Spring, then in high summer.

Brown hairstreak *Thecla betulae*



eggs laid on Blackthorn twigs or wild Damsons in sunny sheltered position in mid Aug to Sept, remaining on branch until following May.

Caterpillar: hatches May till end June feeding on blackthorn leaves at dusk. After 40 to 60 days of feeding they crawl to the ground to pupate.

Chrysalis (June to August)

Prune blackthorn July/ early August when caterpillars have left and before next egg laying.

Speckled wood *Pararge aegeria*



eggs on wide range of grass blades. Up to three broods April to Oct.

Caterpillars on grass from Spring, some for 8 months hibernating as caterpillars, others pupate after one month hibernating as Chrysalis suspended 20cms off ground on grasses.

Adults: early April till end Oct.

Gatekeeper (or Hedge Brown) *Pyronia tithonus*



needs tall wild grasses beneath sunny sheltered hedges/ trees. Live in colonies with little movement over years.

Eggs: July-Sept at base of shrubs, on leaves and in bark.

Caterpillars 11 months from Aug to June. Feeds in tall grasses below hedges or wood edges.

Chrysalis: June & July.

Adult flight July, August

- **Butterflies needing Nettles**

In sun or semi shade. cut patches in early June for lush new growth for 2nd brood. Then cut down in winter (Nov onwards).

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*



Migrates to Europe winter (a few may over winter in mild years now).

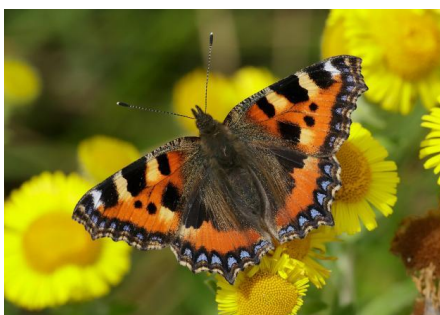
Eggs: on nettles April to Sept (hatch after one week).

Caterpillars (3 weeks): feed on nettles, making a small tent of leaf to hide in.

Chrysalis: July to Oct, suspended from nettle leaf.

Adults: Late April till Nov

Small tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*



Eggs: two broods, laid on underside of young nettles in full sun, April to May, then late June to end Aug.

Caterpillar: lives in groups in conspicuous untidy web approx. 4 weeks.

Chrysalis suspended from walls, or tree/shrub branches over winter

Adult: July to following March. Hibernates as a butterfly in sheds, under roofs etc. Very low numbers in recent

years due to cold late springs and wet winters.

Peacock *Aglais io*



Flies all year in dappled woodlands, sunny gardens etc, feeds esp on buddleia, knapweed, teasles and thistles.

Eggs: In May, laid in dense clusters on underside young nettles in sun Hatch in 2 weeks.

Caterpillar: May to early July, in groups in webs in nettles.

Chrysalis: singly suspended from leaves of trees and shrubs; mid June to Mid Aug.

Adult: Aug to flowing May (hibernating as adult in sheds etc)

Comma *Polygonia c-album*



Lays eggs (two broods) on nettles or hops in sun or dappled sun esp woodland or hedge edges. May-Sept, hatch after 2 weeks.

Caterpillar: live singly on nettles and other plants for 7 weeks.

Chrysalis: end June to mid Sept Hibernates in dry woods.