

An Introduction to Moths and Their Larval Foodplants



West Wales Biodiversity Information
Centre's

Recording Toolkit

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An Introduction to Moth Species and Their Larval Food Plants

Introduction

There are over 2500 UK moth species and this brief guide is aimed at introducing the reader to the important associations between plants and moth larvae.

The moth species are arranged in alphabetical order by common name and cover a range of families with different appearances and habits. The photographs are predominantly of the adult stage.

Resources

UK Moths <https://www.ukmoths.org.uk/>

Butterfly Conservation <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/identify-a-moth>

National Moth Recording Scheme <https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/recording-and-monitoring/national-moth-recording-scheme>

The State of Britain's Larger Moths 2021 by Butterfly Conservation <https://butterfly-conservation.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/StateofMothsReport2021.pdf>

Field Guide to the Caterpillars of Great Britain and Ireland, Barry Henwood and Phil Sterling

Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland, Paul Waring and Martin Townsend

Field Guide to the Micro-moths of Great Britain and Ireland, Phil Sterling and Mark Parsons

Micro-moth Field Tips. A Guide to Finding the Early Stages in Lancashire and Cheshire. Vol 1

Micro-moth Field Tips. A Guide to Finding the Early Stages in Lancashire and Cheshire. Vol 2

Photo credits

Some photographs are marked to denote they have not been taken by the author.

* Photographs by Julian Wormald

** Photograph by Kate Smith

Alder Moth, *Acronicta alni* [Alder Moth | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Alder, Crab Apple, Aspen, Beech, birches, Blackthorn, Dog-rose, Dogwood, elms, hawthorns, oaks, Raspberry, Rowan, Sweet Chestnut, Sycamore, Wild Cherry and willows

Alder Kitten, *Furcula bicuspis* [Alder Kitten | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Alder and birches

Angle Shades, *Phlogophora meticulosa* [Angle Shades | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Blackthorn, Enchanter's-nightshade, Groundsel, Hazel, Honeysuckle, Great Mullein, Lady's-mantle species, Red Valerian

Black Arches, *Lymantria monacha* [Black Arches | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Mainly oaks

Blood-vein, *Timandra comae* [Blood-vein | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Common Chickweed, Common Sorrel, docks and Redshank

Brimstone Moth, *Opisthograptis luteolata* [Brimstone Moth | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Blackthorn, Hawthorn and Rowan

Brindled Beauty, *Lycia hirtaria* [Brindled Beauty | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Alder, Alder Buckthorn, Aspen, Beech, birches, Hawthorn, Hazel, oaks, Pear, Plum and willows

Broom Moth, *Ceramica pisi* [Broom Moth | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Bilberry, birches, Bracken, Bramble, Broom, docks, Dog-rose, elms, Heather, Yellow Iris, thistles, Common Toadflax

Buff Arches, *Habrosyne pyritoides* [Buff Arches | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Bramble and Dewberry

Buff Ermine, *Spilosoma lutea* [Buff Ermine | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Elder, Honeysuckle, Ivy, Common Nettle, Nipplewort, Common Ragwort

Buff-tip, *Phalera bucephala* [Buff-tip | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Birches, Hazel, oaks and willows

Burnet Companion, *Euclidia glyphica* [Burnet Companion | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Plants in the pea family such as
Common Bird's-foot Trefoil, clovers,
Lucerne, Black Medick and Tufted Vetch

Chinese Character, *Cilix glaucata* [Chinese Character Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Blackthorn and Hawthorn

Clouded Border, *Lomaspilis marginata* [Clouded Border Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Aspen, poplars and willows

Common Marbled Carpet, *Dysstroma truncata* [Common Marbled Carpet Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Alder, Bilberry, birches, docks, Bramble, geraniums, Hawthorn, heathers, Meadowsweet, oaks, Raspberry, roses, Wild Strawberry, willows

Common Quaker, *Orthosia cerasi* [Common Quaker Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Alder, Aspen, Beech, birches, Blackthorn, Sweet Chestnut, Guelder-rose, Hawthorn, Hazel, oaks and willows

Coxcomb Prominent, *Ptilodon capucina* [Coxcomb Prominent Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Alder, Beech, birches, Hawthorn, Hazel, Hornbeam, limes, Field Maple, oaks, roses, Rowan, Sweet Chestnut, Sycamore and willows

Small Elephant Hawkmoth, *Deilephila porcellus* [Small Elephant Hawk-moth Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Heath Bedstraw, Lady's Bedstraw

Elephant Hawk-moth, *Deilephila elpenor* [Elephant Hawk-moth Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Fuschias, Great Willowherb, Rosebay Willowherb, other willowherbs are the main food source. Others include Himalayan Balsam, Hedge Bindweed, bedstraws, Enchanter's-nightshade, Purple-loosestrife

Emperor, *Saturnia pavonia* [Emperor Moth Adult | UKmoths](#)



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Larval food plants include:

Alder Buckthorn, Bell Heather, Bilberry, birches, Blackthorn, Bog-myrtle, Bramble, Cross-leaved Heath, Hawthorn, Hazel, Hemp-agrimony, Marsh Cinquefoil, Meadowsweet, Purple-loosestrife, Raspberry, Rowan, Salad Burnet, Tormentil and willows

Eyed Hawkmoth, *Smerinthus ocellata* [Eyed Hawk-moth Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Mainly Apple, Crab Apple and willow species

Flame Shoulder, *Ochropleura plecta* [Flame Shoulder Adult | UKmoths](#)



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Larval food plants include:

Lady's Bedstraw, Common Chickweed, dandelions, docks, Groundsel, Knotgrass, Ribwort Plantain and Woodruff

The Forester, *Adscita statice* [The Forester Adult | UKmoths](#)



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Larval food plants include:

Common Sorrel and Sheep's Sorrel

Fox Moth, *Macrothylacia rubi* [Fox Moth Male | UKmoths](#)



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Larval food plants include:

Bilberry, birches, Blackthorn, Bloody Crane's-bill, Bog-myrtle, Bramble, Burnet Rose, Creeping Cinquefoil, Creeping Thistle, Cross-leaved Heath, Heather, Knotgrass, Meadowsweet, Salad Burnet, Wild Strawberry, Wood Sage

Frosted Orange, *Gortyna flavago* [Frosted Orange Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Burdocks, Foxglove, Hemp-agrimony
and thistles

Garden Tiger, *Arctia caja* [Garden Tiger Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Apple, Blackthorn, Bracken, burdocks,
Common Nettle, Common Ragwort, Marsh
Ragwort, dandelions, dead-nettles, docks,
plantains, Rowan, Smooth Sow-thistle,
thistles and willows

Ghost Moth, *Hepialus humuli* [Ghost Moth Male | UKmoths](#) [Ghost Moth Female | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Roots of burdocks, dandelions, dead-
nettles, docks, Water Figwort, grasses,
Black Horehound, Hop, nettles and Wild
Strawberry

Gold Spot, *Plusia festucae* [Gold Spot Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Branched Bur-reed, Glaucous Sedge,
Tufted Sedge, rushes, Water-plantain,
Yellow Iris and Yorkshire Fog

Green Carpet, *Colostyia pectinataria* [Green Carpet Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Heath Bedstraw, Hedge Bedstraw, Lady's Bedstraw, plantains, White Dead-nettle, Wild Marjoram and Woodruff

Heart and Dart, *Agrotis exclamationis* [Heart & Dart Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Common Chickweed, docks, goosefoots and plantains

The Herald, *Scoliopteryx libatrix* [The Herald Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Aspen, poplars, Rowan and willows

Iron Prominent, *Notodonta dromedarius* [Iron Prominent Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Alder, Downy Birch and Silver Birch

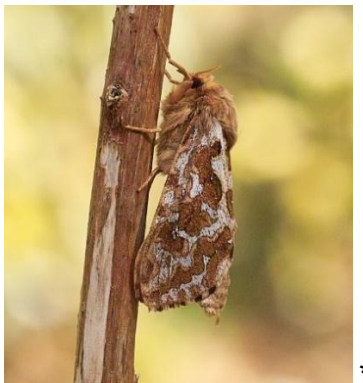
Lobster Moth, *Stauropus fagi* [Lobster Moth Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Beech, birches, Hazel and oaks

Map-winged Swift, *Korscheltellus fusconebulosa* [Map-winged Swift Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Roots of Red Fescue and the roots and lower stems of Bracken

Merveille du jour, *Griposia aprilina* [Merveille du Jour Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants:

Mainly Pedunculate Oak

Muslin Moth, *Diaphora mendica* [Muslin Moth Pair | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Common Nettle, Dandelions, plantains, Red and White Dead-nettles, stitchworts, docks and Great Mullein

Nut-tree Tussock, *Colocasia coryli* [Nut-tree Tussock Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Mostly Downy Birch and Hazel

Pale Prominent, *Pterostoma palpina* [Pale Prominent Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Poplars, Aspen and willows

Peach Blossom, *Thyatira batis* [Peach Blossom Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Mainly Bramble and Raspberry

Peppered Moth, *Biston betularia* [Peppered Moth Typical form | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Beech, birches, Blackthorn, Bramble, Broom, Goldenrod, Hawthorn, Mugwort, oaks, roses, spruces, Sweet Chestnut and willows

Poplar Hawkmoth, *Laothoe populi* [Poplar Hawk-moth Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Aspen, poplars and willows

Powdered Quaker, *Orthosia gracilis* [Powdered Quaker Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Bilberry, Common and Greater Bird's-foot Trefoils, Blackthorn, Bog-myrtle, Bramble, Common Fleabane, Creeping and Spear Thistle, Meadowsweet, Purple-loosestrife, St. John's-worts, oaks and willows

Puss Moth, *Cerura vinula* [Puss Moth Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Aspen, poplars and willows

Red Twin-spot Carpet, *Xanthorhoe spadicearia* [Red Twin-spot Carpet Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Mainly Heath Bedstraw and Lady's Bedstraw

Ruby Tiger, *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* [Ruby Tiger Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Ragworts, Bramble, Broom, Creeping Thistle, dandelions, docks, Common Fleabane, Goldenrod, heathers, Purple Moor-grass, plantains, Spindle, stitchworts, Yarrow

Scallop Shell, *Rheumaptera undulata* [Scallop Shell Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Aspen, Bilberry, Goat Willow and Grey Willow

Scalloped Oak, *Crocallis elinguaris* [Scalloped Oak Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Beech, Bilberry, Crab Apple, Blackthorn, Bog-myrtle, Hawthorn, cotoneasters, Heather, Honeysuckle, oaks, roses, Rowan and willows

Scorched Wing, *Plagodis dolabraria* [Scorched Wing Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Mainly Downy and Silver Birch and oaks

Sharp-angled Peacock, *Macaria alternata* [Sharp-angled Peacock Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Alder, Alder Buckthorn, Blackthorn, Bog-myrtle, Sea Buckthorn and willows

Shoulder Stripe, *Earophila badiata* [Shoulder Stripe Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Burnet Rose, Dog-rose and Sweet Briar

Silver Y, *Autographa gamma* [Silver Y Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Bedstraws, Broom, clovers, Common Nettle, Common Restharrow, Common Toadflax, dandelions, docks, Hop, limes and Lady-fern

Small Angle Shades, *Euplexia lucipara* [Small Angle Shades Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Birches, Bracken, currants, Foxglove, Hazel, Ivy buds, Male-fern, nettles, oaks, thistles and willows

Small Phoenix, *Ecliptopera silaceata* [Small Phoenix Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Broad-leaved Willowherb, Great Willowherb and Rosebay Willowherb

The Spectacle, *Abrostola tripartita* [The Spectacle Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Common Nettle

Swallow Prominent, *Pheosia tremula* [Swallow Prominent Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Aspen, poplars and willows

Swallow-tailed Moth, *Ourapteryx sambucaria* [Swallow-tailed Moth Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Beech, Blackthorn, Bramble, Elder, forget-me-nots, Hawthorn, Holly, Honeysuckle, Horse-chestnut, Ivy, Lilac, oaks, Sycamore

The V- Pug, *Chloroclystis v-ata* [The V-Pug Adult | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Bramble, Dog-rose, Elder, Goldenrod, Hawthorn, Hemp-agrimony, Mugwort, Purple-loosestrife, Perforate St. John's-wort, Traveller's-joy, Wild Angelica, Wild Thyme

Vapourer, *Orgyia antiqua* [The Vapourer Male | UKmoths](#) [The Vapourer Female | UKmoths](#)



Larval food plants include:

Bilberry, birches, Blackthorn, Bog-myrtle, cotoneasters, elms, Hazel, Heather, limes, oaks, roses, Sycamore and willows

White Ermine, *Spilosoma lubricipeda* [White Ermine Adult | UKmoths](#)

Larval food plants include:

Common Nettle, Common Ragwort and docks

