

Large White

Pieris brassicae

Insects · On the wing Apr–Sep · two broods



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Our largest white butterfly, with bold black wingtips that extend well down the outer edge of the forewing; females also carry two black spots on each forewing. Large whites are common in gardens, allotments and farmland around Dumfries, and are one of the two species gardeners mean by 'cabbage white'. Numbers are boosted in some years by migrants arriving from the continent.

BEHAVIOUR

Unlike most butterflies the large white lays its eggs in conspicuous yellow batches on the underside of brassica leaves, and the caterpillars feed gregariously — which is why damage appears suddenly and comprehensively. The caterpillars sequester mustard oils from the foodplant and are distastefully coloured black and yellow to advertise it. Many are parasitised by the wasp *Cotesia glomerata*.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Whites and yellows (Pieridae)
WINGSPAN	5.5–6.5 cm · our largest white
STATUS	Native, with continental migrants; common

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