

Marmalade Hoverfly

Episyrphus balteatus

Insects · Active Mar–Nov



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A small, slender hoverfly, orange with a distinctive pattern of paired black bands on each abdominal segment — one thick, one thin — which no other common hoverfly shares. Marmalade hoverflies are abundant in gardens, verges and farmland around Dumfries, and are among the first and last flying insects of the year. Like all hoverflies they have two wings, not four, and cannot sting.

BEHAVIOUR

The black-and-orange banding is Batesian mimicry — it borrows the warning colours of wasps without any of the weaponry. Adults hover precisely, hold station in mid-air and visit a huge range of open flowers, making them important pollinators. The larvae are voracious aphid predators, each eating hundreds during development, which makes the species valuable in gardens and crops.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Hoverflies (Syrphidae)
SIZE	9–12 mm
STATUS	Native, plus large migrations; abundant

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