

Orange-tip

Anthocharis cardamines

Insects · On the wing Apr-Jun · one brood



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A medium-sized white butterfly of damp meadows, verges, hedgerows and gardens. Males are unmistakable, with a broad orange patch across the tip of each forewing. Females lack the orange entirely and are often mistaken for a small white — until they settle and show the mossy green marbling on the underside of the hindwing that both sexes share. Orange-tips are widespread around Dumfries wherever their foodplants grow.

BEHAVIOUR

Males patrol steadily along hedgerows, ditches and damp verges looking for females, rarely settling for long. Eggs are laid singly on the flower stalks of cuckooflower and garlic mustard, and the caterpillar is cannibalistic — a female will avoid a plant that already carries an egg, which is why you rarely find two on one stem. The species spends ten months of the year as a pupa.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Whites and yellows (Pieridae)
WINGSPAN	4.5-5 cm
STATUS	Native; widespread and spreading north

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