

Ruby Tiger

Phragmatobia fuliginosa

Insects · On the wing Apr–Sep · two broods



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A smallish, furry tiger moth whose forewings are a plain dusky pinkish-brown, concealing crimson-red hindwings and a bright red-and-black abdomen. Northern individuals, including Scottish ones, tend to be noticeably darker than southern ones. Ruby tigers are common on rough ground, heath, verges and gardens around Dumfries, and come readily to light.

BEHAVIOUR

At rest the moth is drab and easy to overlook; disturbed, it flashes the crimson beneath. Adults fly at night, with males also active in sunshine in the afternoon. The caterpillar is a dark hairy larva that feeds on a wide range of low plants — ragwort, dock, plantain, heather — and it is the caterpillar that overwinters, often maturing quickly in early spring.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Tiger moths (Erebidae, subfamily Arctiinae)
WINGSPAN	3–3.5 cm
STATUS	Native; common and widespread

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