

Silver Y

Autographa gamma

Insects · A migrant · seen May–Oct, peaks Aug



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A medium-sized, mottled grey-brown moth with a clear silvery-white mark shaped like a letter Y — or the Greek gamma — on each forewing. Silver Y moths reach Dumfries as migrants every year, in numbers that vary from a handful to a mass arrival, and can be found nectaring at flowers by day as well as at night, with a distinctive rapid, whirring hover.

BEHAVIOUR

It feeds like a tiny hawk-moth, hovering at a flower head with wings a blur and probing with a long proboscis, and will do so in broad daylight. It cannot survive a British winter in any life stage, so every individual here is either a migrant or the offspring of one. Caterpillars feed on a very wide range of low plants including nettle, clover and garden crops.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Owlet moths (Noctuidae)
WINGSPAN	3–4.5 cm
STATUS	Migrant; cannot overwinter in Britain