

# Butterfly of the Month 'The Comma'



The white “comma” mark on the underwing gives the butterfly its name



Above: **Adult Comma**

Left: **Caterpillar (larva)**

Right: **the caterpillar’s favourite food plant – Nettles**

(Pictures courtesy of Steve Young & John Fox)



**The Comma butterfly (*Polygonia c-album*)** - has distinctively ragged wing edges, which help to camouflage it. At rest, it looks just like a dead leaf!

It gets its name from the comma-shaped white spots on the underneath of its wings.

It prefers woodland edges particularly during the spring and autumn but can be spotted feeding on fallen fruit in gardens.

It is on the wing throughout the year, having several broods and overwintering as an adult. The caterpillars feed on common nettles, elms and willows.

They have brown and white flecks that make them look like bird-droppings and help to camouflage them.

**Caterpillars:** stinging nettle is the preferred food, but adults will also lay eggs on species of willow, currant, elm and hops.

**Adults:** feed on nectar of wild flowers such as thistle and knapweed. They can also be seen feeding on ripe blackberry and fallen fruit such as plums in autumn.