

Small Tortoiseshell

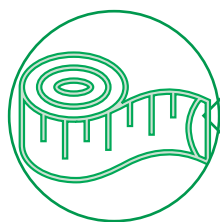
Habitat Hero



Common Name: Small Tortoiseshell
Irish Name: Ruán Beag
Scientific Name: *Aglais urticae*

Seen in Ireland:

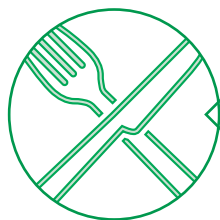
Most active
April to September



Size: This beautiful butterfly has a wingspan of around 5cm.



Habitat (where they live): This is a very common butterfly which visits gardens at homes and schools, woodlands and hedgerows.



Diet: Its caterpillar babies feed on the Common Nettle. The adult butterfly feeds on lots of different flowers.

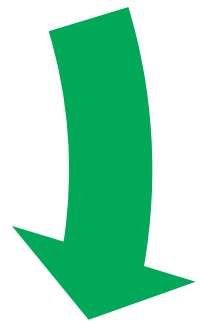
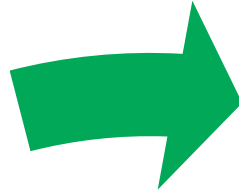
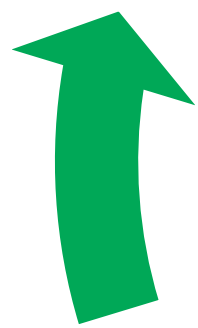


Life: they can live up to 10 months.

Small Tortoiseshell Life Cycle

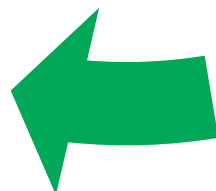
In Autumn they find somewhere warm and dry to sleep for the whole Winter.

In Spring the butterflies wake up and find a partner. The mammy lays eggs on Nettles.



Later in Summer the caterpillars build a cocoon. In only 3 weeks they turn into a Butterfly!

In early Summer caterpillars come out of the eggs and start to eat the leaves of the Nettles.



Small Tortoiseshell

Some more Facts:

- This beautiful butterfly is mainly reddish-orange with black markings and blue spots around the border.
- The underside is quite dull.
- Small tortoiseshells often **hibernate** (a long sleep over winter) in our houses and sheds over the winter.
- It is better to have them in the shed than the house, as the heating in the house will trick them into thinking that Spring has arrived.
- Adult butterflies come out of hibernation in Spring.
- The mammy or 'female' lays eggs on nettle leaves.
- Eggs hatch after 10 days, and little caterpillars come out. Caterpillars then grow by changing the size of their skin a few times this is called 'moulting'
- Moulting is a bit like us getting new clothes as we grow bigger.
- After their final moult they hang from plant stems, wrapped in a cocoon
- They stay in the cocoon for about two weeks.
- They then come out in the shape of a butterfly!

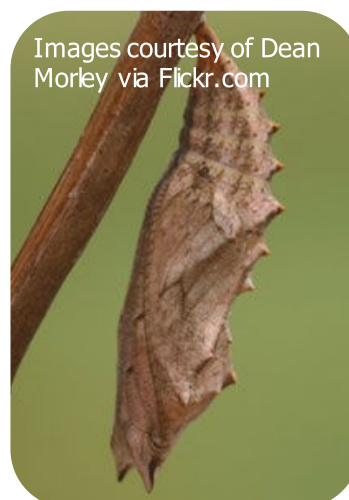
Eggs



Caterpillars



Cocoon



Dull underside



Colourful side

