

Red admiral

Vanessa atalanta

Caterpillar

Eggs are laid on nettles, also on hops and pellitory-of-the-wall

Caterpillars vary in colour from black to brown to greenish-grey, with a yellow line along each side. The upper surface is covered with a row of spines

The young caterpillar makes a little tent by folding the leaves together and fixing them with silk, where it lives and feeds, hidden from predators, until it has outgrown the space. It then makes a new tent and moves on

If disturbed, it curls up into a ball



Butterfly

A migrant from Central Europe, appearing in May and June. A small number overwinter in the south of the UK, but most of these perish in the cold

They feed mainly on the nectar of flowers, favourites including ivy, bramble and buddleia, and are also partial to rotting fruit

When resting on the ground or on a tree trunk, the undersides of their wings are so well camouflaged they are almost invisible as they blend into the background.

One of the last butterflies to be seen before winter sets in

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