

The Orange-tip

The Orange-tip, is on the wing from early to mid April and throughout May. It's main caterpillar foodplants are Garlic Mustard, or Jack-by-the-Hedge, *Alliaria petiolata* and Lady's Smock, or Cuckoo Flower, *Cardamine pratensis*.

Garlic Mustard is easy to grow. It's name comes from the flavour of its leaves, which are edible. They add a bit of zing to salad and can be used as an alternative to spinach in recipes.

Lady's Smock likes it damp, so is not an easy garden plant, but if you have a boggy area or want to pot it and keep it damp, it's worth a go.



There is also an ornamental garden plant which the butterfly will use, Honesty, *Lunaria annua*, which is hardy and easy to grow. Honesty and Garlic Mustard are both biennials, which means they do not flower until the second year: worth bearing in mind if you are growing from seed. Once established Garlic Mustard is a prolific self-seeder.

The eggs are laid singly, just beneath the flower head, from April to May. Sometimes you can find more than one but these will have been laid by different females. The egg is pale white at first but soon becomes the distinctive orange that makes them quite easy to find, once you have your eye in. The eggs hatch after about a week.

The green caterpillar eats the young flowers and developing seed heads of all three foodplants, and it takes around two to three weeks to grow to full size. It will then wander off to find somewhere to pupate, usually low down. There it will spend the summer and winter before the adult emerges next spring

