

**THE BURNISHED BRASS MOTH, *DIACHRYSIA CHRYSITIS*, (LEP: NOCTUIDAE) — A NETTLE SPECIALIST?**

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ACCORDING to Skinner (1984) the larvae of *D. chrysitis* feed on "common nettle and probably other low plants". Davis (1983) divides the insects that feed on stinging nettles into three categories. The first of these is the insects that are restricted to stinging nettle or at least to the genus *Urtica*. Secondly there are the species such as the Comma butterfly *Polygonia c. album* that are limited to the order Urticales which contains the families Urticaceae (nettles), Cannabaceae (hops), Ulmaceae (elms) and Moraceae (figs) (Clapham, Tutin and Moore, 1987). Davis' third category contains species that "feed on nettles and unrelated plants such as grasses or thistles or dead-nettles," ie. polyphagous species. Davis considered *D. chrysitis* to be "more or less restricted" to nettles and other Urticales.

In July 1987 I found a first instar larva of *D. chrysitis* feeding on marjoram, *Origanum vulgare*, on a roadside embankment at Wansford, Cambs. The nearest nettles were five metres away. I reared the larva exclusively on *Origanum*, and the adult emerged in September 1987. *Origanum* therefore meets the criteria given by Ward (1988) for acceptance as a valid host plant record.

A brief search through the literature provided a number of other host plant records for *D. chrysitis* and these are summarised in Table 1. It is likely that some of the later works are repeating information contained in earlier ones. It is clear that *D. chrysitis* has been recorded from various members of two families of plants within the order Solanales in addition to members of the Urticales. Perhaps we can expect future records from other common members of the Solanales such as *Thymus* (thyme), *Prunella* (selfheal), *Ajuga* (bugle) and *Stachys* (woundwort). The records from *Arctium* (burdock) *Achillea* spp and *Cirsium* (thistle) suggest that *D. chrysitis* can feed even more widely, on members of the Compositae. I would be interested to hear of any larvae of *D. chrysitis* found on plants other than stinging nettles.

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### Some interesting second and third brood records of Lepidoptera seen in Yorkshire in 1989

A number of readers have recorded unusual second or third brood specimens during 1989, and below are a selection from Yorkshire, mainly the Selby district. I have incorporated records from Dr Heron (AH); Mr Winter (PW); Mr Spencer (BS); Dr Barnham (MB); Mr Beaumont (HB) and Mr Crowther (PC).

#### Butterflies

*Pararge aegeria* L. (Speckled Wood) — a few, presumably third brood seen at Owston Wood, South Yorks. 15.10.

*Lasiommata megera* L. (Wall) — one specimen of third brood seen at Bishop's Wood 26.10; also Harrogate 28.9 and 19.10 (MB).

*Lycaena phlaeas* L. (Small Copper) — a third brood usually occurs here. In 1989 several seen near Barlow, 10.10; also Harrogate 28.9 and 26.10 (MB).

#### Geometridae

*Timandra griseata* Peters (Blood-vein) — First brood in good numbers, July. Second brood 13.8; 19.8, 13.9.

*Scopula imitaria* Hb. (Small Blood-vein) — Several first brood in July; second brood, unusual in the north, 26.9 and 1.10.

*Idaea biselata* Hufn. (Small Fan-footed Wave) — One second-brood specimen taken by J. Whiteside at Grass Wood, Grassington, 17.10.

#### Lymantriidae

*Euproctis similis* Fuess. (Yellow Tail) — Second brood captures W. Melton 17.10 (HB); Wass, 16.10 (AH); Spurn, 27.10 (BS).



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