

POPLAR HAWK MOTH

Laothoe populi



DESCRIPTION – With a wingspan of up to 10cm, the poplar hawkmoth is a big moth. Its wings are intricately marked with a camouflage pattern comprising subtle natural colours. On its forewings it has a white comma shape whilst the chestnut brown patches on its hindwings, though usually partly hidden, are both noticeable and striking.

What really makes the poplar hawkmoth special is the shape of its wings. The fringe of both fore- and hindwings look like they've been cut by pinking shears. The forewings are long and relatively slender, swept back somewhat like an aeroplane. The hindwing is broader and projects out from beneath the forewing when at rest, giving the moth a distinctive, quite ornate, appearance.

IDENTIFICATION & HABITAT – This hawkmoth flies at night and despite its name you don't have to live near poplars to see this hawkmoth. Its larvae do feed on a wide range of poplars but also on various willows and salallows. This is the most widely distributed hawkmoth in Britain and is a common visitor to gardens.

In the north of the UK its summer season comes to an end in August while in the south it has a second generation of the year which flies during August and September.

LARVA - The green larvae feed on Poplar, Aspen and Willow. The larva's spike is pale greeny-yellow, sometimes with a red tinge at the base.

