

Lime Hawk-moth *Mimas tiliae* (Linnaeus)

The Lime Hawk-moth, with a wingspan of 20-80mm, varies in appearance between the sexes and between individuals. The ground colour of the males may be pink to olive-green with the females varying from light pink to reddish-brown. The Lime Hawk-moth is characterised in part, by the presence of one or more blotches, or a band of olive-green colour, across the centre of the forewing.



Photograph Emily Funnell/Butterfly Conservation

This band of colour in combination with the forward position of the hindwings when resting, serve to disrupt the typical outline of the moth, that frequent predators of moths may actively seek and associate with prey.

The Lime Hawk-moth flies from May to July and may be found, if you can spot it, at rest during the day on trees, walls, and amongst lime foliage. The moth has been recorded in most habitats where

the foodplants occur, including deciduous woodland, parks and gardens. The adults do not feed but are sometimes attracted to light after dusk. The Lime Hawk-moth is resident to Britain and is common from the south, to some of the northern English counties, but it remains more local in Wales.

Caterpillars of the Lime Hawk-moth feed on limes, elms, birches and Alder, and have less frequently been found feeding on cultivated cherry trees, and have a slightly curved bluish horn at the tail end.

Active from June to September, you may spot full-grown caterpillars crawling down tree trunks in parks and on city limes when they go in search of a pupation site. At this stage the body changes in colour from yellowish-green to a dull purplish colour. The Lime Hawk-moth overwinters as a pupa, usually buried just below the ground, close to the foodplant.



Photograph R Leverton