

Habitat management for the Striped Lychnis

The overall aim is to ensure a continual and plentiful supply of the larval foodplant. This plant is biennial and requires regular ground disturbance to become established.

- ◆ Leaving unploughed field margins, and leaving long term fallow or 'set-aside' land, may encourage the foodplant and benefit the moth.
- ◆ Road verges, or other sites, with mulleins should not be cut between May and September, when the foodplant is in flower.
- ◆ Cutting in early autumn, once the foodplant is in seed, and again in spring, will prevent sites from becoming overgrown and help to spread the seeds of the foodplant.
- ◆ Some disturbance of the soil will be needed from time to time to provide suitable conditions for the foodplant. Small-scale rotovation or scarification should be undertaken on rotation to provide a mosaic of different vegetation structure, including areas of bare earth.

How to survey/monitor

The best method is searching the foodplant by day for larvae, which are highly conspicuous and sit on the flowering spikes and leaves. Larvae are most easily seen in August and early September. Larvae of the related Mullein moth *Shargacucullia verbasci* are superficially similar, but have black spotting between each segment, whereas Striped Lychnis larvae generally have a clear band of pale green between each segment. Mullein moth larvae are also usually active earlier in the year, between May and July, and are rarely seen during August.



above Field margin habitat
below left Dark Mullein, the larval foodplant
below right Ideal verge habitat



Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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