

Macro-moths of Cambo Gardens

S.T. Buckland

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I have included images of the species that I have been able to photograph in and around the East Neuk. I have also added an image from elsewhere for three species that I have recorded at Cambo but not photographed there: purple bar, straw dot and wormwood pug. My thanks go to Callum Halstead and Elise Methven for their help and enthusiastic support, and to Nigel Voaden for confirming the identity of the more difficult species.

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Angle shades

Common across a range of habitats and through most of the year. Autumn numbers are boosted by immigrants.









Antler moth

A common grassland species, often seen nectaring on flowers in daylight.





Barred red

A common species in areas with conifers.





Barred straw

A common species where cleavers or other bedstraws grow.





Barred yellow

A relatively common species where wild or cultivated roses grow.





Black rustic

A common species in a range of open habitats.







Bordered sallow

A rare and largely coastal species in Scotland. This one was at Cambo Gardens in late June 2026.





Brick

A fairly common autumn species, mostly of broad-leaved woodland.







Bright-line brown-eye

A common species in a range of habitats.





Brimstone moth

A common woodland species.







Brindled pug

A common spring species where oaks grow.









Broad-bordered yellow underwing

Common, especially in broadleaved woodland.







Brown rustic

A common species, especially in broad-leaved woodland, but also in a range of other habitats.





Brown silver-line

A species that can be very abundant where bracken is plentiful.



Brown-spot pinion

A declining autumn species, but still quite common in Fife.







Buff footman

A southern species that has been spreading northwards for several decades, first reaching Scotland in 2008. It is now fairly common in established woodland in Fife.





Buff-tip

Mostly a species of open woodland which is fairly local in Fife.





Bulrush wainscot

A locally-distributed species, occurring where bulrushes grow. It also sometimes occurs well away from its food plant.







Burnished brass

Common, especially in areas where nettles grow.









Canary-shouldered thorn

A common woodland species in autumn.





Centre-barred sallow

A common autumn species where ashes grow.







Chestnut

A common species, especially in broad-leaved woodland. The adult appears in autumn, then again in spring, after hibernation.









Cinnabar

A distinctive moth. Its caterpillars have yellow and black hoops and are a familiar sight feeding on ragwort.









Clay

A common summer species in grassy habitats.







Cloaked minor

A common summer species in grassy habitats.





Clouded border

A common species where poplars or sallows grow.





Clouded-bordered brindle

A common species in grasslands and gardens.





Clouded drab

A common spring species, especially in broadleaved woodland.







Clouded silver

A species that has increased its range in Scotland in recent years, and is now relatively common in Fife, especially in broadleaved woodland, scrub and gardens.





Common carpet

A common species from spring to autumn, occurring in a range of habitats.







Common footman

A species benefitting from climate change, which is now common in coastal Fife.







Common lutestring

A species of woodlands where birches grow.





Common marbled carpet

A variable species that is common in summer and autumn in a range of habitats.









Common pug

Common across a range of habitats.









Common quaker

A very common spring species, especially in or near woodland.







Common rustic /

lesser common rustic

Two common grassland species with variable markings that cannot be separated from images.







Common swift

Common in open habitats, including gardens.







Common wainscot

Very similar to the more common smoky wainscot, but with white hind wings instead of smoky.





Common white wave

A common species of broadleaved woodland.





Copper underwing

As with the very similar Svensson’s copper underwing, this is a southern species that has spread into Scotland, and is now fairly common in Fife.







Crescent

A species of marshes and other damp habitats where yellow iris or great fen-sedge grows. This was one of two at Cambo in mid-August 2026, probably migrants from continental Europe.





Dark arches

A common summer species of grassy habitats.







Dark sword-grass

A migrant species, usually recorded at coastal sites in small numbers.









December moth

A common species of late autumn and early winter, most numerous in broadleaved woodland.





Dotted clay

A common summer species in a range of habitats.







Double-striped pug

A small pug that is common across a range of habitats.







Double square-spot

A common species in a range of habitats.







Dun-bar

A common species, especially in woodland.







Early grey

A spring species, occurring where honeysuckles grow.





Elephant hawk-moth

The second most common hawk-moth in Fife, most numerous in areas with willowherb.





Feathered thorn

A fairly common autumn species, occurring mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Flame

A fairly common species that occurs in a wide range of habitats.





Flame carpet

A common species across a range of habitats.







Flame shoulder

A common species across a range of habitats.





Flounced rustic

A fairly common grassland species in summer.









Foxglove pug

Common where foxgloves grow.





Garden carpet

A common species, especially in gardens.









Garden dart

This species is declining rapidly, and is now a scarce species in Fife.







Ghost moth

A species that occurs in grassy and weedy places. This is a female. Males are white, and perform a display at dusk, swinging like a pendulum.





Golden-rod pug

A fairly common species in Fife, occurring where ragwort grows.



Gold spangle

A scarce species in Fife, this one was in the walled garden at Cambo in early August 2026. The vivid blue in the above image is where the pale markings are reflecting the mothing light.





Green carpet

Common across a range of habitats.







Green pug

A fairly common species whose larvae feed on a range of trees and shrubs, including apple, hawthorn and blackthorn.





Green silver-lines

A locally-distributed species in Scotland, occurring mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Grey chi

A declining species which is now quite scarce in Fife. The one below was at Cambo Gardens in August 2025, and the one above in August 2026.







Grey dagger

Widely but sparsely distributed in Fife. It occurs mostly in woodland, hedgerows, gardens and scrub. This one was at Cambo Gardens in mid-August 2026.





Grey pine carpet

A common species where conifers grow.





Grey pug

Common across a range of habitats.









Heart and dart

A species that is spreading northwards, and is now common, especially in lowland habitats.







Hebrew character

A very common spring species across a range of habitats.





Hummingbird hawk-moth

A migrant from southern Europe and northern Africa. This one was at Cambo Gardens in early July 2026.







Ingrailed clay

A fairly common and very variable species of woodland and moorland.







Iron prominent

A fairly common species, occurring where birches or alders grow.





July highflyer

Common in a range of habitats.





Large wainscot

A locally-distributed species that occurs mostly in or near reedbeds. This one was at Cambo Gardens in mid-September 2025.





Large yellow underwing

A large, variable and very common grassland species.







Least black arches

A species that was scarce, but is becoming fairly common, mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Least yellow underwing

A scarce moth in Fife. These were in the garden in late July 2025 and early August 2026.









Lempke’s gold spot

A locally-distributed species in Scotland that has increased in recent years. It occurs mostly in marshes and other damp habitats. This one was at Cambo in mid-June 2026.







Lesser broad-bordered yellow underwing

A very common species in summer at Cambo Gardens.







Lesser swallow prominent

A common species where birches grow.





Lesser yellow underwing

This variable species is common across a range of habitats.







Light arches

A common summer species in grasslands.





Light emerald

A common species, especially in broadleaved woodland.





Lime-speck pug

A sparsely-distributed species in Fife, occurring in a range of open habitats.





Lunar thorn

A locally-distributed species, occurring mostly in open woodland and scrub.



Lunar underwing

A common autumn species in grassland habitats.









Lychnis

A common species where red or white campions grow.





Map-winged swift

A common species in Fife, especially in areas with bracken.







Marbled beauty

A species that tends to occur near old buildings or walls, as the caterpillars feed on lichens growing on stones.





Marbled minor

Although not certain, these are probably marbled minors. The two species that it cannot reliably be separated from using photos are both much less common.









March moth

A common species of early spring, especially in open woodland.







Merveille du jour

An autumn species that is sometimes common in broadleaved woodland with oaks.





Middle-barred minor

A very common species in grassland habitats that can often be seen on flowers in daylight.









Mottled beauty

A common woodland species.





Mottled pug

A fairly common species of woodland, scrub and hedgerows.









Mottled rustic

A locally-distributed summer species of lowland habitats.





Mottled umber

A fairly common species of broadleaved woodland that flies in late autumn and early winter.



Mouse moth

A common and widespread species. When threatened, it scuttles like a mouse, hence its name.





November moth

A common moth of broadleaved woodland in late autumn.







Nut-tree tussock

A common moth of broadleaved woodland.





Oak-tree pug

A rare moth in Fife. This one was at Cambo Gardens in late May 2026.



Ochreous pug

A patchily-distributed species that occurs where pines grow.



Orange sallow

This species has a patchy distribution in Scotland, occurring where lime trees grow.





Orange swift

Fairly scarce in Fife. It occurs in areas with rough grass.







Pale brindled beauty

A very common woodland species of late winter and early spring.





Pale pinion

A locally-distributed species of broadleaved woodland which is spreading northwards.





Pale-shouldered brocade

A common species, especially in woodland.





Pearly underwing

A scarce migrant, occurring mostly at the coast. These were at Cambo Gardens in September 2025.









Pebble prominent

A fairly common species where poplars, sallows or willows grow.





Peppered moth

A fairly common species of woodland and other habitats with trees or shrubs.





Phoenix

Occurs in low numbers, mostly in gardens where currants or gooseberries grow.





Pine beauty

Occurs in small numbers where pine trees grow. These were in the gardens in late March and early April 2026.







Pink-barred sallow

Common where sallows or poplars grow.





Plain golden Y

Fairly common across a range of habitats.



Poplar hawk-moth

A common species in areas where poplars grow.







Powdered quaker

A locally-distributed species in Fife, occurring mostly in damp habitats.





Pretty pinion

The UK distribution of this species is largely restricted to Scotland. It is locally-distributed in Fife, occurring where eyebrights grow. This one was at Cambo Gardens in late July 2026.





Purple bar

A common species where bedstraws grow.



Purple clay

A summer species, common in broadleaved woodland.





Red chestnut

A fairly common spring species of broadleaved woodland.





Red-green carpet

A common species of broadleaved woodland in autumn, and again in spring after hibernation.







Red-line quaker

A fairly common autumn species where willows grow.





Riband wave

Common across a range of habitats.







Rivulet

A common species where red campion grows.





Rosy minor

In Fife, a scarce species occurring in grassland habitats, especially on or near the coast. This one was at Cambo Gardens in late July 2026.





Rosy rustic

A common species of lowland habitats.





Ruby tiger

A common species of open habitats.





Rustic

A common species of lowland habitats.





Sandy carpet

A common species in a range of habitats.





Satellite

A common species, especially in broadleaved woodland. It flies in autumn and again in spring. It can also be recorded on mild nights in winter.







Scalloped oak

A woodland species that is fairly common in summer.





Scarce bordered straw

A migrant from southern Europe and Africa. In most years, very few are recorded in the UK. The one above and below was at Cambo Gardens in early September 2025, while the one on the right was there in mid-September 2025.









Scarce umber

A fairly common species of broadleaved woodland that flies in late autumn and early winter.





Seraphim

A locally-distributed species, occurring where aspens or other poplars grow. This one was in the woodland just south of Cambo House in early May 2026.





Setaceous hebrew character

A common lowland species.





Shaded broad-bar

A common species of open grasslands where clovers or vetches grow. It can often be seen in daylight.



Shuttle-shaped dart

A southern species that has spread into Scotland, occurring in a range of habitats.









Silver-ground carpet

A common species, especially in damp habitats with tall vegetation. It can often be seen during daylight.







Silver Y

An abundant migrant moth, occurring in a wide range of habitats.









Six-striped rustic

A common species of wet and damp habitats.







Slender brindle

A fairly common woodland species.





Small dotted buff

A species of wet grassland. Not numerous in the east of Fife. These were at Bankhead Moss.



Small dusty wave

A fairly common species in Fife. Its caterpillars feed on plant debris.







Small fan-footed wave

A common species, mostly in broadleaved woodland.





Small mottled willow

A moth that is a farm pest in some parts of the world, but an occasional migrant in Scotland. Records are becoming more frequent. These were at Cambo in June and July 2026.









Small phoenix

A common species where willowherbs grow, especially in woodland.







Small quaker

A fairly common spring species, occurring mostly in broadleaved woodland.









Small rivulet

A common species in a range of lowland habitats.



Small square-spot

A common summer species in a range of habitats.







Small wainscot

A species of damp habitats, as its caterpillars feed on sedges.





Smoky wainscot

A common grassland species.





Snout

A common species where nettles grow.







Southern wainscot

A species of marshes and other wet habitats. It has mostly a southern distribution, but has been spreading northwards. It is still very local in Fife. This one was at Cambo Gardens in mid-July 2026.







Spruce carpet

Common where conifers grow. Its caterpillars feed on a wide range of conifers, not just spruce.







Square-spot rustic

A common grassland species.









Straw dot

A common species of damp grasslands.



Streak

A fairly common autumn species where broom grows.





Streamer

A common species where wild roses grow.



Svensson’s copper underwing

A southern species that has spread into Scotland, and is now fairly common in Fife.







Swallow prominent

Fairly common where poplars or sallows grow.







Swallow-tailed moth

A fairly common woodland species, also occurring in parks and gardens.





Tawny speckled pug

A fairly common species of grasslands, open woodland and coastal habitats.







Twin-spot carpet

A fairly common species occurring in a variety of habitats.



Twin-spotted quaker

Previously rare in Fife, this species has spread north, and is now a fairly common species of broadleaved woodland.







Uncertain

A common species in lowland habitats, very difficult to separate from the rustic.





V-pug

A fairly common species of woodlands, hedgerows, parks and gardens.



Water carpet

Widespread and common in spring.





White ermine

Common across a range of habitats.







White-line dart

A variable species that is mostly coastal in Fife.



White-spotted pug

A scarce species in Fife which occurs in a range of lowland habitats.







Willow beauty

A relatively common species in gardens and urban parks, but scarce away from towns and villages.







Winter moth

Widespread and common, flying in late autumn and winter.



Wormwood pug

A common species in a range of habitats. Its larvae feed on a number of plants, including ragwort and yarrow, and not just wormwood.



Yellow-barred brindle

A scarce species of broadleaved woodland.



Yellow horned

A fairly common spring species where birches grow.





Yellow-line quaker

A common autumn species, especially in broadleaved woodland.







Yellow shell

A common summer species across a range of habitats.





