

SHERWOOD FOREST SHEET 4

THE MOTHS OF

Sherwood Forest's smallest moths are some of the most interesting to study. A largely neglected group of micromoths are the leafminers. The leafmining moths are the smallest of Sherwood Forest's wide range of moths, with wingspans barely reaching past 10mm. Most leafminers are generally smaller than this and difficult to see. Their caterpillars are much easier to find, because of the galleries they create on leaves. Leafmining moths lay their eggs on the upper or lower surface of a leaf.

On hatching, the caterpillar eats into the leaf and feeds between both surfaces. When ready to pupate, it eats a small exit hole and often drops into the leaf-litter, where it spins a cocoon.



Another group of very small, mostly brown moths are known as case-bearers. Although another leafmining group, their caterpillars construct portable cases, made of a section of leaf, around themselves for protection. As the caterpillar grows, it makes a series of new (larger) cases and changes into a chrysalis inside the final case, before emerging as a moth. By searching the leaves of Sherwood's Oaks and Silver Birches, you will soon find the galleries of leafmining and case-bearing moths.

One of Sherwood Forest's commonest micromoths, is the Spring flying longhorn *Adela reamurella*. It flies during the day and 'swarms' of these little moths, can be seen dancing over large bushes and at the end of Oak branches. They look dark, but when seen close up, have gold wings.

The Small Magpie is a common moth at Sherwood Forest and you may disturb it from plants and bushes as you walk past. Of course, during a visit to Sherwood Forest, you can see all sorts of moths, so take time to look and enjoy Sherwood's little marvels!

Moths illustrated

- 1 Leafmine
- 2 Case-bearer
- 3 Tortrix Moth
- 4 Longhorn Moth
- 5 Pyralid Moth
- 6 Small Magpie
- 7 Tortrix Moth

