

Nasturtium butterfly hotspots

The great white butterfly sets up breeding sites in nasturtium. Large nasturtium patches are being removed where possible to stop these breeding hotspots.

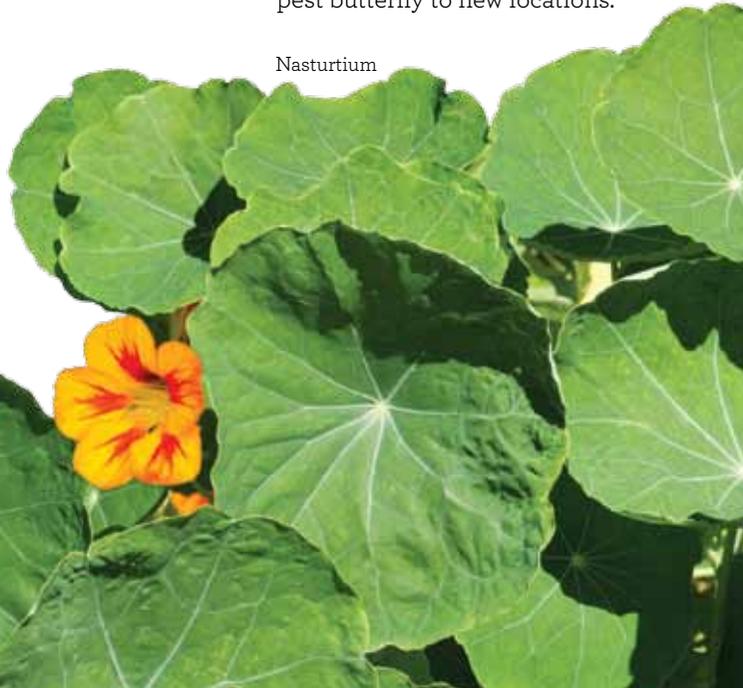
You can help by:

- Removing or cutting back nasturtium in your garden. If you don't want to fully remove nasturtium, please keep checking these plants for caterpillars and eggs and report any found.
- Reporting large, overgrown patches of nasturtium to the great white butterfly team at DOC's Nelson District Office, phone (03) 546 3147 or email greatwhitebutterfly@doc.govt.nz.

Check for pupae

People taking trailers, boats and caravans out of the Nelson Tasman region are asked to check no great white butterfly pupae are on board before they leave home. This is especially important if they are usually parked near host plants. Any pupae found should be reported and removed before leaving to avoid spreading the pest butterfly to new locations.

Nasturtium



Butterfly eradication programme

The great white butterfly was first found in Nelson city in 2010. DOC is attempting to eradicate the pest butterfly while it is still within a relatively small area in Nelson Tasman region to prevent it spreading further in New Zealand.

As part of the eradication programme, DOC field staff are searching home gardens for great white butterfly caterpillars, eggs and pupae (chrysalises). Any found are removed, mostly by hand.

Because the butterfly flies around, repeat visits to properties are needed to check for new infestations.



The great white butterfly eradication programme is supported by MPI, Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council, Vegetables New Zealand and other agencies.

Thank you for your help

To find out more

Visit www.doc.govt.nz or contact:
Great white butterfly eradication team,
DOC Nelson District Office
Email: greatwhitebutterfly@doc.govt.nz
Phone: (03) 546 3147

All images, unless otherwise credited, are by Richard Toft

This publication is produced using paper sourced from well-managed, renewable and legally logged forests.

Published by:
Department of Conservation
Nelson District Office
Private Bag 5, Nelson 7042
New Zealand
October 2013

Design:
Publishing Team, DOC National Office

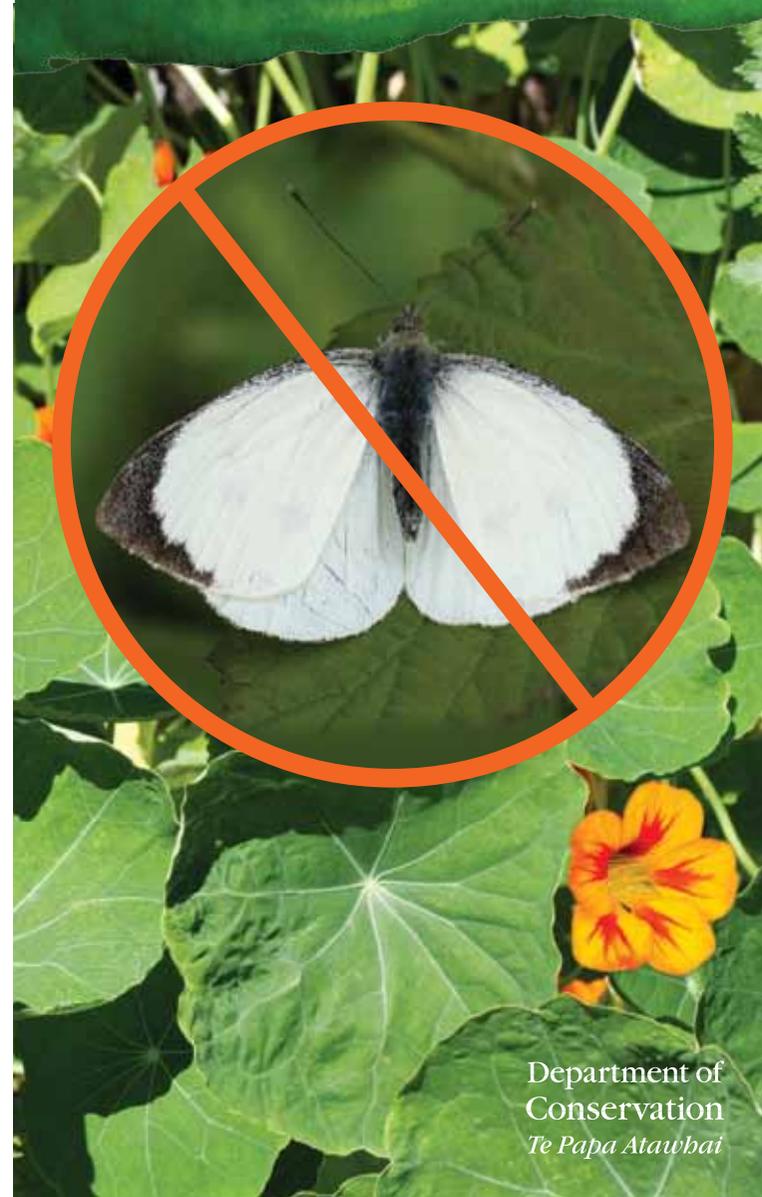
newzealand.govt.nz

If you believe you have seen any great white butterfly caterpillars, eggs or pupae please call the MPI hotline 0800 80 99 66

Cover: Male great white butterfly
Photo: www.improvedimage.co.uk

Great white butterfly

HELP STOP THIS MAJOR NEW PEST



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Your help is needed to stop this serious pest

The great white butterfly (*Pieris brassicae*) is a new pest that poses a major economic and environmental threat. It has been declared an unwanted organism in New Zealand under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

Your help is **vital** to stop it becoming a widespread, permanent pest in New Zealand.

- **Please look regularly for great white butterfly eggs and caterpillars on host plants and report any found to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Exotic Pest and Disease hotline 0800 80 99 66. They are found in clusters on the butterfly's favoured plants, including nasturtium, honesty and brassica vegetables such as broccoli and cabbage.**
- **If you see a great white butterfly, kill it – the females can lay as many as 750 eggs, so although it sounds harsh, killing them will prevent them spreading. Don't worry about killing small white butterflies by mistake – they are also a pest.**

Destructive to plants

The great white butterfly is a significant pest of brassica plants in numerous countries; in some it is known as the large white butterfly.

It is far more destructive to plants than the common small white butterfly. Great white butterfly caterpillars feed in groups, rapidly reducing plants to a skeleton.

As well as being a menace in home gardens, the great white butterfly poses a threat to commercial brassica vegetable crops and endangered native cresses – it could cost the country millions of dollars to protect these from the pest butterfly if it became widespread in New Zealand. Threatened crops include forage brassica crops to feed farm livestock for New Zealand's dairy and meat industries.

Brassica plants favoured by the butterfly as host plants include cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, kale, bok choy, mizuna, rocket, turnips and swedes.

The pest butterfly could also have serious consequences for the survival of many of New Zealand's 79 native cress species.

How to identify the great white butterfly

Look for caterpillars and eggs like these on the leaves of the great white butterfly's favoured host plants, including nasturtium, honesty and brassica vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower. The pupae can be found near host plants on vertical structures such as fences, poles and buildings.



Great white butterfly eggs are tiny, yellow and laid in clusters of 30 to 100, sometimes more.

Very young great white butterfly caterpillars are tiny and yellowish with a shiny black head.



As the caterpillars grow they become speckled black and greyish green with three yellow lines along their bodies. Pale hairs on their body become more noticeable as caterpillars mature.



Fully grown caterpillars like this are about 50 mm long.

The great white butterfly pupa (chrysalis) can be either greyish white or pale green. Both forms are speckled with black and gold.



The great white butterfly looks similar to the common small white butterfly but is larger, and there are differences in the black markings on their wings. It can be difficult to tell the two butterfly species apart.

Other similar-looking insects

Some other insects have life stages that look similar to great white butterfly caterpillars or eggs. Guidance to help tell the difference between great white butterfly caterpillars and eggs and those of other insects can be found by searching 'great white butterfly' on the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz.

If you believe you have seen any great white butterfly caterpillars, eggs or pupae please call the MPI hotline 0800 80 99 66