

Cynthia cardui Linnaeus, 1758. sin. *Vanessa cardui*

Papallona dels cards (cat.) , Mariposa de los cardos (cast.), Painted lady (eng.)

Distribution. Widespread with the exception of South America.

Description. Adult. 55-60 mm wingspan. The wings are orange in colour with black blotches, and in the case of the forewings, there are also white blotches on the apical area. The back of the forewings follows the pattern of the upper face, and the hindwings are ochre in tone with a line of eyespots in the area below the edge of the wing.
Caterpillar. Between 35 and 40 mm long. Dark green or black in colour with yellow spots and prolonged fine soft hairs. They build a silk refuge on the back of the leaves of the foodplant. The larva takes approximately one month to develop.
Chrysalis. 25-27 mm. Metallic gold, greenish and pinkish in colour. It hangs upside down. It pupates for a period of between 10 and 20 days when it emerges as an adult.

Caterpillar foodplants. Polyphagous. In Catalunya some twenty foodplants have been established. The caterpillars prefer rudaceous plants such as mallow and cardoons.

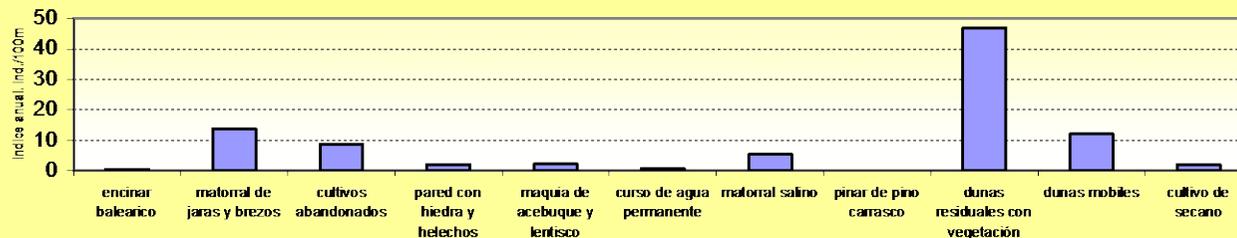
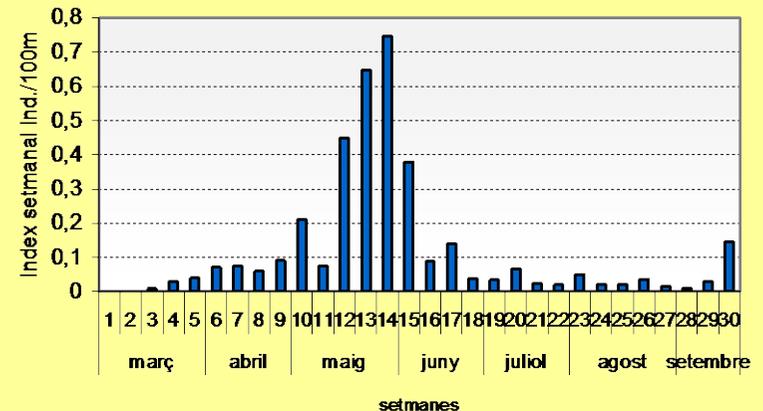
Cynthia cardui in Menorca

Representation in the BMS (Butterfly Monitoring Scheme). Owing to its migratory nature, the population levels fluctuate very much from one season to another. There have been years when none has been observed, and others when it has constituted 11% of the observations made by the network.

Flight time. Species having more than one brood and migrates from Africa and Europe. It starts to appear in the month of April and reaches its peak in May and June. At the end of June or the beginning of July, the descendants of the spring migratories, which leave Mediterranean environments because of the summer drought and head to more southern latitudes, are born. From the middle of August and especially in September and October, a new migratory passage of the examples born in the continent of Europe during the summer is seen again, and heads towards the African continent. The autumn passage is moderate compared to that of the spring.

Habitat and behaviour. Open spaces, it has great mobility. It can be found in very diverse surroundings but mostly in open areas where there are foodplants (cardoons, mallow, etc). In the BMS its most abundant habitat is in sand dunes with vegetation and sips nectar from scabious. (*Scabiosa atropurpurea*), scilla (*Urginea maritima*) and marine thistles. (*Eryngium maritimum*).

Similar species present in Menorca. None.



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