

Leptidea sinapis Linnaeus, 1758

Blanqueta (ca.); Blanca esbelta (es.); Wood white (en.)

Distribution. Widespread and common in Europe to the south of Latitud 66 degrees North, also on the majority of the Mediterranean Islands. It is not found in Scotland, nor in the North of England, Holland or Germany.

Description. Adult. 30-40 mm wingspan. They are the smallest members of the *Pieridae* family. Narrow white wings with a delicate appearance. They have a grey blotch on the outer edge of the forewings (apex), but this is poorly defined on the females. The back of the wings is also white with grey shadows towards the tips. The antenna is mainly black with a brown edge and a white ventral blotch. Long and slender abdomen sprinkled with white. **Caterpillar.** 16-18 mm. Green in colour with darker green dots and a straight lengthwise white line. It has numerous short white hairs which grow larger on the edges. They are very passive and move little. **Chrysalis** 15mm. They are of a pale green colour with a lengthwise white line on the sides. They are elongated with pointed edges and hang from the stalks of the foodplants by means of a thread of a thoracic silk thread and by a cremaster embedded in a silk pad. The last generation chrysalises hibernate.

Foodplants .The larvae feed off various species of leguminous plants, especially vetch (*Vicia spp.*) and wild peas (*Lathyrus spp.* y *Lotus spp.*).

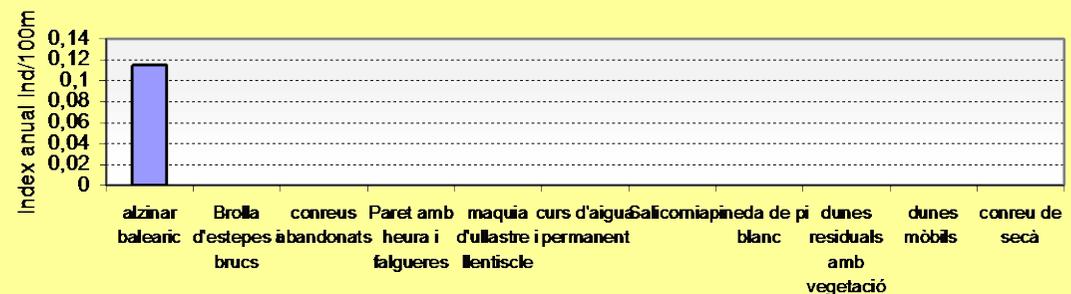
Leptidea sinapis in Menorca

Representation in the BMS (Butterfly Monitoring Scheme). Species poorly represented until now on the routes covered by the BMS. It did not appear until the research station of Santa Catalina was incorporated into the BMS network and where there woodland.

Flight time. It appears to be a species which has two broods, a more numerous one in May and a second one in July-August. The second generation descendants hibernate as a chrysalis. Owing to the fact that they have been observed infrequently, there is no flight curve pattern.

Habitat and behaviour Closed woodland. They have only been observed in wooded areas in groves of holm oaks. They fly slowly and low and settle frequently.

Similar species found in Menorca. In 1998 it was recorded that what had, up until then, been called *L.sinapis* I actually referred to two different species : *L.sinapis* and *L.realis*, which shows how hard it is to differentiate between one species and another on first sight, but it seems that *L.realis* prefer medium height mountain environments so it is probable that they are not found in Menorca. Neither has their presence been registered in Majorca. With regard to the similarities with the species which we find in Menorca, they can be confused with *Pieris rapae* or *Pieris napi* but they are not of a yellowish colour like *Pieris* and, on the other hand, they have wider wings and do not have dark blotches on the central area of the forewings.



Leptidea sinapis



Photograph by: José Manuel Sesma



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