

Hidden Wildlife ~ Common Leafmines

A series of ID guides to help you discover more of Leicestershire's wonderful wildlife

Some wildlife species are almost never seen as adults, yet they can be common and easy to find if you know the clues. All the species below have caterpillars/larvae that live within leaves and as they tunnel through, eating the plant tissue, they leave tell-tale trails. Many leafminers are very choosy and are only found on one species, or a closely related group. The combination of knowing the plant species and the pattern of the leafmine means we can recognise the insect inside. Leafmines start small but widen as the larvae grows and travels further across the leaf, whilst also leaving a pattern of droppings (frass).
When viewing online, simply click on the species name to find out more.



Horse Chestnut Leafminer – *Cameraria ohridella*

ID: Moth. Multiples brown blotches, each usually between two side veins. The adult flies from June.

Where: Horse Chestnut.

Similar: None (as a mine).



Holly Leafminer – *Phytomyza ilicis*

ID: Fly. Pale green blotches, turning pink-purple. The adult flies in June, having overwintered in the leaf.

Where: Holly.

Similar: None (as a mine).



Firethorn Leafminer *Phyllonorycter leucographella*

ID: Moth. Silvery mine in the leaf centre.

Where: Firethorn (*Pyrocantha*), Hawthorn, Apple. All year on Firethorn.

Similar: None on Firethorn (as a mine).



Columbine Leafminer – *Phytomyza aquilegiae*

ID: Fly. Pale blotch, turning brown. Often several per leaf. From mid Summer.

Where: Columbine (*Aquilegiae*) and related plants.

Similar: None (as a mine).

Become a citizen scientist! If you can spot any of these species, why not submit your sighting at www.naturespot.org.uk and contribute to our scientific knowledge of local wildlife. Record data submitted by the public is vital to conservation. Simply register online then follow the guidance on the Submit Records page. When recording leafmines, always mention the host plant species.

Other common Leicestershire leafmines to check out:

[Parornix anglicella](#), [Phyllonorycter corylifoliella](#), [Lyonetia clerkella](#), [Coptotriche marginea](#)



Scarce Maple Pygmy - *Stigmella aceris*

ID: Moth. Thin, snaking gallery. Turns brown with age.
Where: Field Maple (occasionally Norway Maple). From late June.
Similar: None (as a mine).



Small Beech Pygmy - *Stigmella tityrella*

ID: Moth. Mine starts at the leaf mid-rib and stays within the side veins. The adult flies from April.
Where: Beech leaves.
Similar: None (as a mine).



Golden Pygmy - *Stigmella aurella* agg.

ID: Moth. Snaking mine, turning white. Can be several.
Where: Bramble. Can be seen all year on old leaves.
Similar: None (as a mine).



Scrubland Pygmy - *Stigmella plagiolella*

ID: Moth. A very narrow gallery turning into a blotch. Can be several per leaf.
Where: Blackthorn. From July.
Similar: None (as a mine).



Phytomyza agromyzina

ID: Fly. Long gallery on the upper leaf surface. Frass often forms a dark central line.
Where: Dogwood. From mid Summer.
Similar: None (as a mine).



Nut-leaf Blister Moth - *Phyllonorycter coryli*

ID: Moth. Silvery blotch on the upper leaf. Can be several per leaf. Can cause the leaf to crease upwards.
Where: Hazel. From July.
Similar: None (as a mine).

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Wildlife ID Guides at:
www.naturespot.org.uk/IDguides



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