



Comma caterpillar



It's now in a J shape ready to change into a chrysalis.



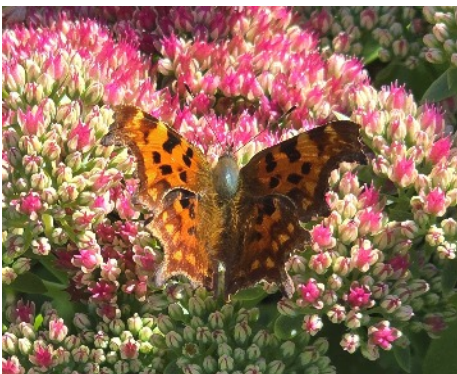
It has now become a chrysalis.



The butterfly is now slowly emerging.



It's pumping fluid into it's wings. This could take 2hrs or more. Note the white comma mark at the centre of the wing.



The Comma that I reared this year, 2025.



Left, the Comma and right, the Red Admiral. They almost emerged together.

While filming the Red Admiral butterflies in August 2025, a Comma caterpillar appeared on a nettle leaf and I was so excited. It must have been curled up inside a nettle leaf, as they too make a leaf tent, where they will moult inside several times, just like the Red Admiral butterfly.

A Comma, *Polygonia c-album* butterfly is called a "Comma" because it has a small white, comma-shaped mark on the underside of it's wings. The eggs are laid singly on the upper side of nettle leaves in April- May and July - August and hatch into caterpillars after about 2-3 weeks.

They spend 5 weeks as caterpillars before finding a spot to build a silk pad and attach it's hind legs before dropping down slowly into a "J" shape, then it will shed it's skin one last time and change into a chrysalis. The chrysalis stays in this stage for 7-18 days before the adult butterfly emerges.

On the 26th of August 2025, I noticed that my Comma chrysalis was getting darker and I could see the colour of it's wings inside. I stayed up all night and it finally emerged at 7.15 in the morning of the 27th of August 2025. I was so tired but if I had gone to bed, I would have missed the emergence.

Not long after, a Red Admiral butterfly emerged too and after they had pumped fluid into their wings, I released them both in my garden at 25 past 2 in the afternoon. Some of the butterflies will over winter in the UK as adults, emerging from hibernation in the spring.

I'm looking forward to next spring so that I can rear some different species.