

ELTHAM COPPER BUTTERFLY FACTSHEET

OCTOBER
2021



The Eltham Copper Butterfly (*Paralucia pyrodiscus lucida*) is an endangered species found in parts of Victoria, Australia.

The Eltham Copper Butterfly has a **unique** triangular shape on the top of its wings, in a bright orange-yellow or copper colour. Its wings are a pale brown colour underneath.



The butterfly was first discovered around Eltham in 1938 and was believed to have become **extinct** around the 1950s.

Eltham and the surrounding areas have the largest populations of the endangered butterfly.

But it can also be found in Greensborough, Montmorency and in regional Victoria in Kiata and Castlemaine.



Did you know?

The Eltham Copper Butterfly is as large as a 10-cent coin.

**10
CENT**

Image: Eltham Copper Butterfly - photo courtesy of Nillumbik Shire Council



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Protecting the Eltham Copper Butterfly

Earlier this year, the Eltham Copper Butterfly was spotted in Montmorency near the Hurstbridge Line Duplication project area – the first time in 40 years!

The butterfly may not have been spotted here previously as it needs a very specific **habitat** to survive.

It needs a dry, woodland environment – somewhere high where water can run off. The woodland also needs to have open patches where certain plants and ants can live.

The butterfly is only seen during a few months of the year, from November to April.

Once spotted earlier this year, a fence was put up to protect the Eltham Copper Butterfly's habitat and no works will happen in that area.

There are also other groups protecting the Eltham Copper Butterfly's habitat. These groups include other government agencies and your local council.

If you live in areas where the butterfly lives, there is more you can do to protect them and help them thrive.



Stick to the paths when walking and riding near butterfly habitat



Plant native trees and shrubs in your garden



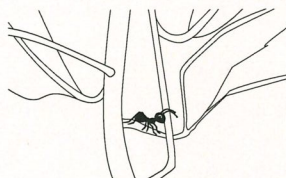
Try not to damage native plants where the butterfly might live

Lifecycle of the Eltham Copper Butterfly

The Eltham Copper Butterfly has a close **symbiotic** relationship with other insects and plants.

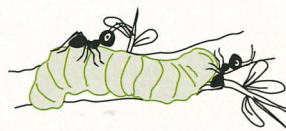
01

The butterfly lays its eggs at the base of a small shrub called Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*). A type of common ant called *Notoncus* also lives in a nest at the base of this small shrub.



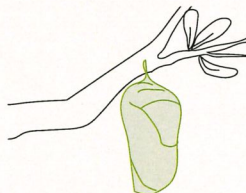
02

When the caterpillar hatches, the ants help the caterpillar live by inviting the caterpillar into their nest to shelter from sunlight, heavy rain and strong wind. The caterpillar helps feed the ants in return, as the ants eat sugar released for the caterpillar's body.



03

Over time the caterpillar changes into a **pupa** – the pupa lives in the ant's nest or very close by.



04

The ants look after the pupa while it grows and transforms into an adult Eltham Copper Butterfly.



Sweet Bursaria



Eltham Copper Butterfly - photo courtesy of Nillumbik Shire Council



Can you spot the ants in the illustration on the next page?

Eltham Copper Butterfly

Colour me in!



Can you spot the ants
in the illustration?



**HURSTBRIDGE LINE
DUPLICATION**

Delivered by Level Crossing Removal Project

**VICTORIA'S
BIG BUILD**



Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

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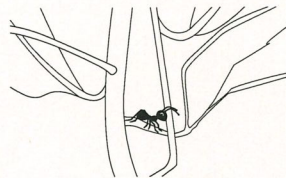
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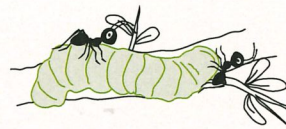
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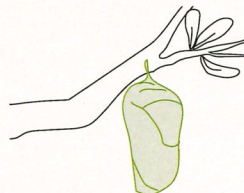
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