

Lycaenidae family

Common Grass-blue

*Zizina labradus labradus***Abundance in Adelaide area:** Common**Flight:** Throughout the year**Wingspan:** m 20mm; f 23mm**Mature larva length:** 12mm

This is the most common native butterfly in suburban gardens. Being small it is often overlooked, although it is attractive. It breeds on clovers in lawns, and on other legumes.

Caterpillar food plants: Pea-flowering herbs and low bushess. The caterpillars eat buds, flowers, young leaves and immature seedpods.

Adelaide native species: Tall Scurf-pea (*Cullen australasicum*), Native Lilac (*Hardenbergia violacea*), Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis* var. *australis*), Austral Trefoil (*Lotus australis*), Red-flower Trefoil (*Lotus cruentus*), Narrow-leaf Bush-pea (*Pultenaea tenuifolia*).

Other South Australian species: Scurf-peas (*Cullen* spp.), Birdflowers or Rattlepods (*Crotalaria* spp.), Native Liquorice (*Glycyrrhiza acanthocarpa*), Indigos (*Indigofera* spp.), Darling or Swainson Peas (*Swainsona* spp.).

Foreign species: Clovers, lucerne, medics, vegetable beans and peas.

The upper side of the wings of the Common Grass-blue is coloured a delicate mauve-blue in the males, sometimes tending to slightly more purple or blue, with a narrow brown margin. The females are a mid-blue to purple with broader mid-brown margins. Some females are nearly all brown; others are similar in colour to the males. Both sexes have a pale grey-white fringe of scales on the outer margins of the wings.



The underside of the wings is a pale colour, varying from the softest grey, through to a very pale fawn-brown. Rows of spots and chevrons of a somewhat darker brown, with obscure white surrounds, mark this background.



The caterpillars are mid-green, with a darker green line down the middle of its back and a white line down each side. The pupae are pale green to pink or grey, with darker markings and are generally attached to the underside of the leaves of the caterpillar food plant.



To encourage this butterfly into the garden, all that is necessary is to let clovers and other small food plants survive in a high mown lawn, or other native food plant species can be grown as feature plants in a dedicated butterfly garden.

