

INSECTS TO SPOT IN SUMMER AROUND GARDENS AND PARKS

Wildlife observations & text by Mike Williams and Marian Hill
Illustrations by Marian Hill

It is vitally important to protect insects. As well as being beautiful, some pollinate our crops, compost waste and get rid of garden pests naturally. How many of these amazing insects can you spot ?



Rose Chafer Beetle (*Cetonia aurata*) - This stunning green beetle is often found on garden flowers and is thought by some gardeners to be a bit of a pest, because it loves eating roses. However, it also feeds on dead and decaying matter, making it a valuable recycler of garden waste. It is around 14-21mm long.



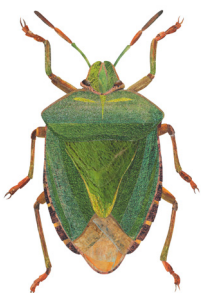
Common Earwig (*Forficula auricularia*) - If you look closely down in the grass you might find these harmless insects. They eat a variety of plants and smaller insects, and one of their favorite foods is white clover. The mother earwigs are famously very protective of their young, which she raises underground. Their name is thought to come from the resemblance of their wings to ears - they are very rarely found in human ears (as in popular folklore) although there have been several cases throughout history when they have! They like dark crevices hence why they might have occasionally curled up in an ear. It is around 10-15mm long.



Black Clock Beetle (*Pterostichus madidus*) - This ground beetle is most helpful to gardeners, as it loves eating garden pests like slugs and caterpillars. It hunts at night and spends the daytime hiding under logs and stones. It is around 14-18mm long.



Dock Bug (*Coreus marginatus*) - This brown bug likes to feed mainly on dock leaves but is also fond of feasting on ripening blackberries and other fruit in late summer. This bug is around 13-15mm long



Green Shieldbug (*Palomena prasina*) - This bright green bug changes to a greeny brown colour in Autumn and is commonly found in gardens, hedgerows and scrubland. It is commonly known as the stink bug, because when disturbed or scared it lets off a really strong and stinky smell. This bug is around 12-14mm long.



14-spot Ladybird (*Propylea quatuordecimpunctata*) - This little beetle is very helpful. It eats garden pests such as aphids. Its pattern can vary dramatically which makes it hard to identify, but its spots tend to be quite square in shape. If threatened, it excretes an orange liquid which may stain your hands and smells very pungent. It is around 3-6mm long.



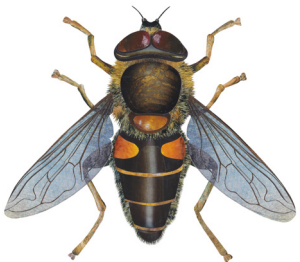
7-spot Ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*) - This little beetle is very helpful as it eats garden pests such as aphids. It is found commonly in parks and gardens, often in large numbers. It is around 6-8mm long.



Harlequin Ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*) - This ladybird arrived in England from Asia in 2004. It is stronger than native English ladybirds and is taking over by eating other ladybirds as well as aphids. As harlequin ladybird numbers rise, 2-spot ladybird numbers have fallen noticeably. These ladybirds come in many patterns which makes them tricky to identify. They can have up to 19 black spots on red or orange backgrounds, or a black background with 2 or more red spots. They are around 8-10mm long.



Red Soldier Beetle (*Rhagonycha fulva*) - This little beetle is very helpful. It eats garden pests such as aphids, slugs and snails. It's also thought to pollinate some flowers. Red soldier beetles are very common & can be spotted on open flowers such as daisies, cow parsley and hogweed. They are about 1cm long.



Tapered Drone-fly (*Eristalis pertinax*) - Very similar to the Common Drone-fly in appearance and habits, but with a more tapered abdomen and a thinner black facial stripe. It is around 8-13mm long.



Marmalade Hoverfly (*Erysyrphus balteatus*) - Usually the colour of marmalade, this small hoverfly is one of the most common species seen in gardens and the countryside throughout most of the year. The larvae eat lots of aphids to the delight of gardeners. Its wing length is around 6-10mm long.



Common Wasp (*Vespula vulgaris*) - Like honeybees and bumblebees, wasps are social insects who make large communal nests with one queen and many workers. The nests are made out of wood-pulp and are very complex. They are important pollinators and also eat numerous insects that gardeners consider to be pests. Wasps will not sting humans unless they are threatened, although in the autumn they do seek out sweet things and may come into contact with humans more frequently. Worker wasps are around 10-15mm long.



Buff-tailed Bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) - A common bumblebee, although there are several very similar species, two of which have only recently been discovered in Britain. Like the honeybee, they make communal nests, often in old rodent burrows, with a single queen and workers who do the job of collecting pollen and nectar. The worker bee is about 10-16mm long



Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*) - Many of the honeybees you see buzzing around the city live in bee hives, although there are sometimes wild honeybees as well. They live together in one big nest and have a worker caste that performs the task of collecting nectar and pollen, while the queen usually stays in the hive laying eggs. Worker bees are around 12-14mm long.



Common Carder Bumblebee (*Bombus pascuorum*) - This bumblebee has a ginger thorax and stripy banding on its abdomen. The males have longer antennae than females. It is a common sight in parks and gardens between June and October. This species of bee usually creates its nest above ground, often in tussocks of long grass and tangles of vegetation. Therefore you can help them by leaving some areas of long grass in your garden. The workers bees are around 8-12mm long.



Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) - These common butterflies are often found into the autumn until the weather begins to cool and they will then hibernate. The caterpillars are frequently found feeding on the nettles on the farm in the summer. They feed on the nectar from many species of flower found in the field and hedgerows. It has a wing span of 50-56mm



Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) - Red admirals are highly migratory butterflies and ride on air currents to travel long distances. Like the Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock the caterpillars also feed on nettles, but they rarely breed in Britain - they arrive in early summer from southern Europe and make their way northwards, and then fly back down south in the autumn, with some hanging around to hibernate in southern Britain. Wing span 67-72mm



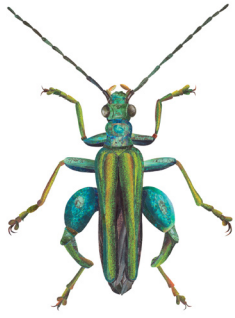
Meadow Brown Butterfly (*Maniola jurtina*) - This butterfly is common and widespread throughout Britain and can thrive in many habitats including parks and gardens. Even on dull days, it can be seen flying low over vegetation, sometimes in large numbers. It is still one of our most widespread butterfly species but many colonies have been lost as a result of intensive farming techniques. Its wing span is around 50-55mm.



Holly Blue Butterfly (male) (*Celastrina argiolus*) - This small blue butterfly can be commonly spotted in parks, gardens, meadows and woodlands during spring and summer. It looks similar to the common blue butterfly but is larger with a wingspan of 26-35mm and tends to fly high over bushes and trees, whereas other blue species fly low to the ground.



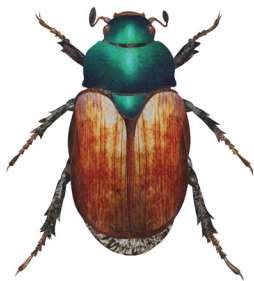
Large White Butterfly (female) (*Pieris brassicae*) - This is a large strong butterfly with a wing span of about 63-70mm. Unlike females, the male butterflies do not have black spots on their fore-wings. This butterfly is unpopular with some vegetable growers, as the caterpillars love to nibble cabbage leaves and brussel sprouts. For this reason they are often called Cabbage White butterflies.



Thick-legged Flower Beetle (*Oedemera nobilis*) - This shiny green beetle can be found in large numbers on open flower heads busily eating pollen. It is thought to help pollinate flowers whilst doing this. The male beetles have much thicker thighs than the females. These beetles are around 9mm long



Cinnamon Bug (*Corizus hyoscyami*) - This handsome bug has recently arrived from Europe. First spotted on the south coast of England, it has been spreading northwards (possibly due to climate change) and has been sighted as far north as Yorkshire. It feeds on a wide range of plants and prefers dry habitats. It's about 8-10mm long.



Garden Chafer (*Phyllopertha horticola*) - This chafer beetle has a shiny dark green thorax and polished chestnut brown wing cases. The adult beetles are found throughout June & July, feeding on a wide variety of plants including grass roots. Chafers are disliked by some gardeners who prize a perfect lawn, as nibbling can cause some bald patches. However the beetles and larvae are a great food source for birds and other wildlife. They can be found on chemical free lawns, meadows, hedgerows and woodland edges. They are about 10mm long



Welsh Chafer (*Hoplia philanthus*) - This small chafer beetle is similar to the garden chafer but less shiny and covered in tiny blue hairs. It feeds on grass roots which can make it disliked by gardeners who want a perfect lawn, as nibbling can cause some scruffy patches of turf. However the beetles and larvae are a great food source for birds and other wildlife. They can be found on chemical free lawns, meadows, hedgerows and woodland edges. This beetle is around 7-11mm long



Rosemary Beetle (*Chrysolina americana*) - This shiny metallic beetle arrived in England from southern Europe in the 1990's. It likes eating rosemary, lavender, thyme and sage. Some gardeners think this beetle is a pest as it nibbles holes in leaves but it is very unlikely to kill the plant it feeds on and is a really beautiful jewel like insect. They are around 6-8mm long



Common Black Ant (*Lasius niger*) - This species of ant is found abundantly throughout the UK and is the only species that can regularly be seen indoors. This can cause a nuisance when kitchens become infested and many people think of them as a pest to be exterminated. However ants are fascinating insects, which can often be seen moving on ant highways across patios and paths. They love feeding on sugary food and can be seen milking aphids for their honeydew. Worker ants are about 3-5mm long