

Subfamily Chrysomelinae

Very convex hairless beetles; antennae generally somewhat thickened towards apex. They are usually collected by sweeping in summer, but some may be found in winter in moss, leaf litter etc.

Source material

Joy (1932) A Practical Handbook of British Beetles.

Lompe A. (2013) Käfer Europas: Chrysomelinae published online on pages linked from <http://www.coleo-net.de/coleo/texte/chrysomelinae.htm>.

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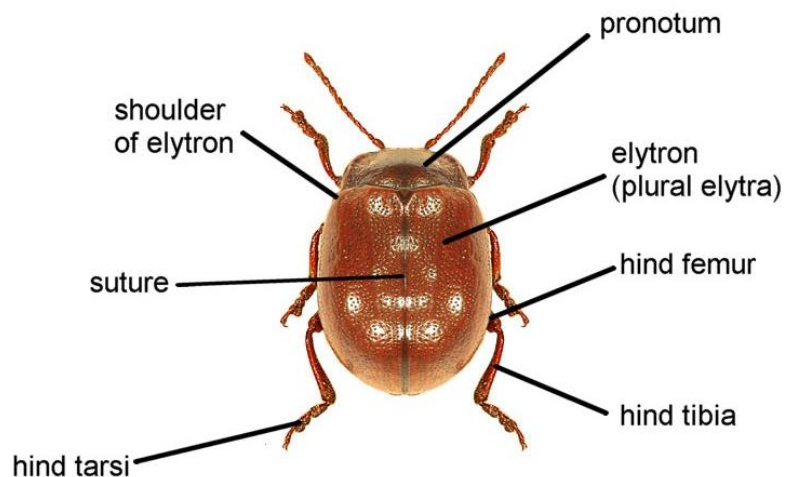


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Checklist from the Checklist of Beetles of the British Isles, 2012 edition, edited by A. G. Duff, (available to download from www.coleopterist.org.uk/checklist.htm).

Subfamily Chrysomelinae

TIMARCHA Samouelle, 1819

CHRYSOLINA Motschulsky, 1860

GASTROPHYSA Dejean, 1836

PHAEDON Latreille, 1829

HYDROTHASSA Thomson, C.G., 1859

PRASOCURIS Latreille, 1802

PLAGIODERA Dejean, 1836

CHRYSOMELA Linnaeus, 1758

GONIOCTENA Dejean, 1836

PHRATORA Dejean, 1836



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CHRYSOLINA Motschulsky, 1860
americana (Linnaeus, 1758)
banksii (Fabricius, 1775)
brunsvicensis (Gravenhorst, 1807)
cerealis (Linnaeus, 1767)
coerulans (Scriba, 1791)
fastuosa (Scopoli, 1763)
graminis (Linnaeus, 1758)
haemoptera (Linnaeus, 1758)
herbacea (Duftschmid, 1825)
hyperici (Forster, 1771)
latecincta (Demaison, 1896)
marginata (Linnaeus, 1758)
oricalcia (Müller, O.F., 1776)
polita (Linnaeus, 1758)
sanguinolenta (Linnaeus, 1758)
staphylaea (Linnaeus, 1758)
sturmi (Westhoff, 1882)
varians (Schaller, 1783)
viridula (De Geer, 1775)
CHRYSOMELA Linnaeus, 1758
aenea Linnaeus, 1758
populi Linnaeus, 1758
tremula Fabricius, 1787
GASTROPHYSA Dejean, 1836
polygoni (Linnaeus, 1758)
viridula (De Geer, 1775)

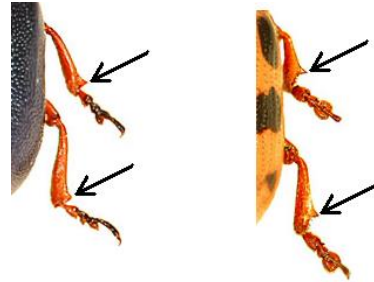
GONIOCTENA Dejean, 1836
decemnotata (Marsham, 1802)
olivacea (Forster, 1771)
pallida (Linnaeus, 1758)
viminalis (Linnaeus, 1758)
HYDROTHASSA Thomson, C.G., 1859
glabra (Herbst, 1783)
hannoveriana (Fabricius, 1775)
marginella (Linnaeus, 1758)
PHAEDON Latreille, 1829
armoraciae (Linnaeus, 1758)
cochleariae (Fabricius, 1792)
concinus Stephens, 1831
tumidulus (Germar, 1824)
PHRATORA Dejean, 1836
laticollis Suffrian, 1851
polaris Schneider, J.S., 1886
vitellinae (Linnaeus, 1758)
vulgatissima (Linnaeus, 1758)
PLAGIODERA Dejean, 1836
versicolora (Laicharting, 1781)
PRASOCURIS Latreille, 1802
junci (Brahm, 1790)
phellandrii (Linnaeus, 1758)
TIMARCHA Samouelle, 1819
goettingensis (Linnaeus, 1758)
tenebricosa (Fabricius, 1775)



Subfamily Chrysomelinae

Key to genus adapted from Joy (1932) by Mike Hackston

- 1 Middle and hind tibiae with a tooth at or near apex of outer side.[2](#)



- Tibiae without a tooth at or near apex.[3](#)



- 2 Elytra reddish to yellowish, with distinct punctures arranged in rows. Tooth on the tibiae before the apex.
..... **Genus *Gonioctena***
4 species. One species has an all black variety



Elytra blue or green, randomly punctured. Tooth at apex of the tibiae.
..... **Genus *Gastrophysa***
2 species.



- 3 Tibiae much dilated. An all-black species with the pronotum widening to meet the curve of the elytra without interruption.

..... ***Oomorphus concolor***

Now in separate subfamily Lamprosomatinae, with one European genus.



Tibiae not so dilated.4



- 4 Elytra with random punctures, or if with a tendency of punctures being arranged in rows then the beetle is at least 6 mm.[5](#)

Elytra with the punctures arranged in regular rows. Length 2.5-5 mm.[8](#)



- 5 Pronotum much narrower than elytra at shoulders.
Either the elytra and the pronotum are both green or
the elytra are reddish and the pronotum is black.

..... Genus *Chrysomela*

3 British species



Pronotum not so much narrower than elytra. [6](#)



- 6 Small dark beetle, length 3-4 mm. Under-
surface flatter.
..... ***Plagioder a versicolora***



Larger species, length 5-11 mm.[Z](#)



- 7 Elytra more rounded at sides, and segments of tarsi more distinctly wide compared to their length.
..... Genus *Timarcha*
2 British species



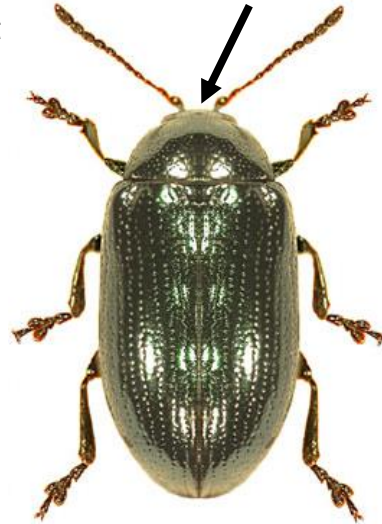
- Elytra variable, but less rounded at sides, and segments of tarsi broader than long but not distinctly so.
..... Genus *Chrysolina*
18 British species



- 8 Space between the points of attachment of the antennae about equal to the length of segment 1 of antennae.

..... Genus *Phratora*

4 British species.



Space between insertion of antennae about twice as long as segment 1.

..... 9



- 9 Elytra less elongate, distinctly rounded at sides. Hind margin of pronotum without a raised border.

..... **Genus *Phaedon***

4 British species



Elytra more elongate, quite or nearly parallel-sided.[10](#)



- 10 Hind margin of pronotum slightly but distinctly ridged; pronotum not as distinctly broad compared to its length. Elytra more elongate.

..... **Genus *Prasocuris***

2 British species.



Pronotum with hind margin without a raised border. Elytra less elongate.

..... **Genus *Hydrothassa***

3 British species.



Genus *Gonioctena*

Key adapted from Joy (1932) by Mike Hackston

- 1 Yellowish-red species, with one or two black marks at the base of the pronotum, and with (usually) three to five round or oval ones on each elytron. Segments 9 and 10 of antennae broader than long. Length 5-7.5 mm.2



Reddish-yellow to black, without round or oval black marks. Segments 9 and 10 of antennae as long as broad.3



- 2 Legs orange-red.
..... ***Gonioctena decemnotata***
England and Scotland, local on aspen.



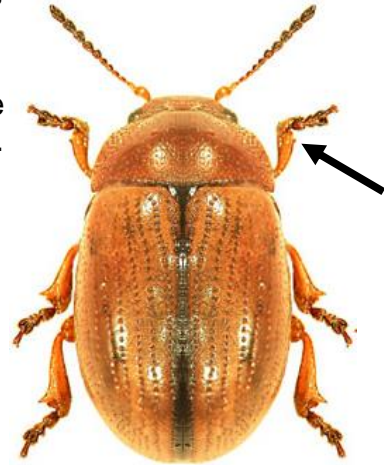
- Legs dark brown to black.
..... ***Gonioctena viminalis***
England, local on willow.



- 3 Middle of the pronotum with much finer punctures than the sides. Front tibia with a small tooth on outer side. Length 3.5-5 mm. Elytra uniformly orange brown, or often darkened along the suture (v. *litura* F.), or entirely black (v. *nigricans* Weise).

..... ***Gonioctena olivacea***

England and Scotland, local on broom.



Pronotum with the punctures in the middle quite, or nearly, as strongly punctured as sides. Front tibiae without a tooth. Length 5-7 mm. Entirely pale brown species.

..... ***Gonioctena pallida***

Generally distributed; local on hazel.



Genus *Gastrophysa*

Key adapted from Joy (1932) by Mike Hackston

On *Rumex*, *Polygonum* and in moss in winter.

- 1 Entirely metallic-green. Length 4-6 mm.
..... ***Gastrophysa viridula***



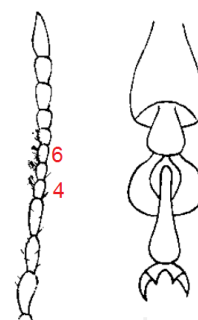
Pronotum, base of antennae, femora
and tibiae red, head and elytra greenish
or bluish, apex of antennae and tarsi
black. Length 3.5-4.5 mm.
..... ***Gastrophysa polygoni***
England and Scotland, local.



Genus *Phratora*

Translated and adapted from Lompe A (2011), Käfer Europas: *Phratora*

- 1 Antennal segments 2 and 3 of almost the same length; segments 4-6 with a cluster of upright hairs on the underside (easiest to see in males). Seventh interstice of the elytra weakly impressed in the middle and separated from the eighth interstice by a keel-like fold. Body elongate, usually blue, often metallic green, copper-violet or black shine. Base of the claws broad with distinct teeth. Male: first segment of the front tarsi broader than the third. Length 4.5 mm.



antenna tarsus

..... ***Phratora vulgatissima***

On various species of willow. Common throughout Europe. April to October. Line drawings from Mohr.

Second segment of the antennae usually shorter than the third; segments after that without hair tufts. Elytra without a keel-like fold.2



- 2 Frons between the base of the antennae clearly hollowed, with two protruding swellings. Antennae relatively long, in males extending somewhat beyond the middle of the body. Pronotum appearing flat, broadest at the middle. Elytra regularly and strongly punctured. Blue or greenish with the legs black. Length 3.5-5 mm.

..... ***Phratora laticollis***

On various willow and poplar species



Frons level or only very weakly impressed, with a small pit in the middle of the front border. Male antennae not as long, shorter than half the body length; even shorter in females.3



- 3 Sides of the pronotum behind often parallel or only slightly curved before the base, at most only weakly narrowing from the base to the front. Sides of the elytra less regularly punctured, with weak swellings on the shoulders. Colour metallic bronze, copper or bluish (rarely black). Length 3.5-5.0 mm.



..... ***Phratora vitellinae***

On various willow and poplar species. Widespread throughout the Palearctic.



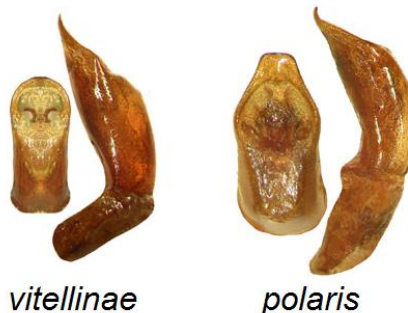
Pronotum strongly convex, widest at or slightly behind the middle, but only distinguished for sure by examination of the male genitalia. Boreal species. Length 3.5-4 mm.

..... ***Phratora polaris***

On *Salix herbacea*. At high altitude in the Scottish Highlands first found in the late 1960s.



aedeagus, face and side view



vitellinae

polaris



Genus *Prasocuris*

- 1 Pronotum and elytra 2-coloured, metallic bronze or greenish-blue and yellow longitudinal strips (sometimes interrupted and occasionally absent) and side margins. Elytra with strong striae. Third tarsal segment not broader than the second, with two narrow, pointed lobes. Length 5-6 mm. .

..... ***Prasocuris phellandrii***

Larvae are stem-miners on various aquatic Apiaceae including *Oenanthe* species.



Body uniformly black with a metallic sheen, except for the tip of the abdomen which has a narrow reddish border. Third segment of the tarsi slightly wider than the second one, the lobes less pointed. Length 4-5 mm.

..... ***Prasocuris junci***

Larvae feeding on *Veronica beccabunga* and *Anagallis* species in damp habitats.



Genus *Hydrothassa*

Translated and adapted from Lompe A (2012), Käfer Europas: *Hydrothassa*

- 1 Pronotum with a red border and much narrower than the base of the elytra. Body more elongate. Pronotum coarsely punctured, but the punctures less dense. Elytra with a reddish border and clear swellings on the shoulders which are extended along the seventh interstice in females as a short longitudinal keel.2

Pronotum scarcely narrower than the base of the elytra and without a reddish border. Body shorter, long-oval. Pronotum with numerous punctures. Elytra uniformly metallic or with a yellowish side border. Length 3.0-4.4 mm.

..... ***Hydrothassa glabra***

On various *Ranunculus* species



- 2 Elytra relatively long, almost parallel, with finely punctured striae. Pronotum and elytra with a reddish border but with no other red markings. Length 3.5-4.5 mm.

..... ***Hydrothassa marginella***

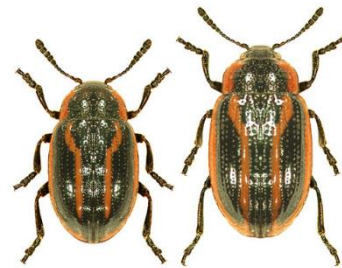
On various species of the buttercup family, including *Caltha palustris*.



Elytra not as elongate, weakly rounded at the edge, with coarsely punctured striae. Elytra with the reddish border and a longitudinal stripe which extends from the third to the fifth interstice (sometimes interrupted and occasionally missing altogether). Length 4-5 mm.

..... ***Hydrothassa hannoveriana***

On *Caltha palustris*.



Genus *Phaedon*

Adapted from Joy (1932)

- 1 Pronotum without punctures on the upper surface. Blue, green, brassy to black.

..... ***Phaedon tumidulus***

Widely distributed in the British Isles.



Pronotum with distinct punctures.2



- 2 Base of the elytra with an elongate depression along the fifth stria with a distinct ridge on the shoulder outside it.

..... ***Phaedon armoraciae***

Widespread in the British Isles.



Elytra with at most a very indistinct depression along the fifth striae and the shoulder without a distinct ridge.3



- 3 Generally blue species. Aedeagus as shown.

..... ***Phaedon cochleariae***

A pest of mustard. Widespread and common in the British Isles, although becoming less common northwards into Scotland.



Generally green. Aedeagus as shown.

..... ***Phaedon concinnus***

A very local species of salt marshes in England and Wales with some records from inland.



Genus *Timarcha*

Adapted from Joy (1932)

- 1 Pronotum much more distinctly tapering from the widest point. Length 11-19 mm.

..... ***Timarcha tenebricosa***

Common species.



Pronotum much more slightly tapering towards the base. Length 8-13 mm.

..... ***Timarcha goettingensis***

Common species.



Genus *Chrysolina*

Translated and adapted from Lompe A (2011), Käfer Europas: *Chrysolina*.

- 1 Last segment of the front tarsus with a distinct apical tooth before the claws. Eyes oval, not kidney-shaped.



..... ***Chrysolina fastuosa***

Widespread in Britain.



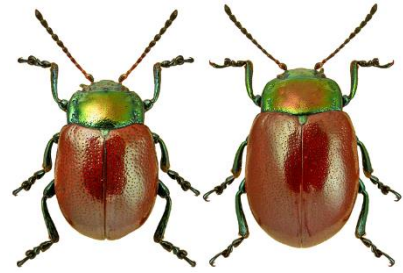
Claws of the front tarsus without a distinct apical tooth. Eyes more or less kidney-shaped.2



- 2 Elytra uniformly non-metallic brick-red or brownish-yellow (the suture may be partly and narrowly blackened). Pronotum black, usually metallic shining.

..... ***Chrysolina polita***

On various labiate plants, especially *Mentha aquatica*.
Widespread and common in Great Britain.



Pronotum and elytra more or less the same colour, metallic or brownish (there may sometimes be a difference in the metallic lustre) or elytra variegated (metallic or with reddish-yellow markings).3



3	Elytra with a red border. Upper surface black or metallic.	4
	Elytra without a contrasting red border.	6



- 4 Last segment of the maxillary palps broadly axe-shaped, truncate, and at least in males broader than the second to last segment. Elytra usually with stronger and coarser irregular punctures. Upper surface black, commonly with a weak bluish metallic shine.5



Last segment of the maxillary palps relatively slender, not truncate and not broader than the second to last segment. Elytra finely to fairly strong punctured, the punctures usually clearly doubled, often in rows.



..... ***Chrysolina marginata***

Widespread in Britain but local.



- 5 Fully winged. Antennae relatively slender, segments 7-9 not broader than long (occasional specimens occur where they approach being as broad as long). Not an upland species.

..... ***Chrysolina sanguinolenta***

On *Linaria vulgaris*. England and Wales northwards to Yorkshire.



Wings shortened. Antennae relatively robust. Boreal species.

..... ***Chrysolina laticincta***

Most records in the north of Britain, but scattered records in the south e.g. in Norfolk.



- 6 Elytra with the punctures in distinct rows (at most becoming weaker near the tips of the elytra). EITHER the base of the elytra with smaller punctures than the dense and deeper ones in the rows - rows of punctures in these cases always completely regular and becoming paired OR base of the elytra without or with very few punctures - in this case the rows of punctures become irregular in places, the punctures doubled or not.7

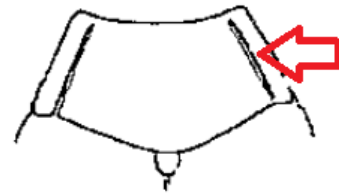
Punctures towards the base of the elytra irregular or at most only partly in rows EITHER elytra completely without superimposed rows of punctures or only traces of these present OR rarely with some partially complete rows of punctures, but these are the same size as those at the base of the elytra.11



- 7 Explanate border of the pronotum extending from the base almost to the front margin forming a sharp shelf. Top of the pronotum at most finely punctured.

..... ***Chrysolina oricalcia***

Widespread in Great Britain, but becoming rare towards the north.



Explanate border of the pronotum reaching at most from the base to the middle, very unclear in the front half, usually represented by a coarse puncture. Striae on the elytra approaching being in pairs.8



- 8 Elytra and pronotum striped, the colour of the stripes usually red and green. Length 6-9 mm.

..... ***Chrysolina americana***

On rosemary and lavender. Widespread in Great Britain, but becoming rare towards the north.



Elytra and pronotum not striped.9

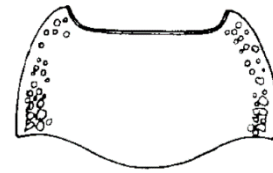


- 9 Explanate sides of the pronotum indicated by a sharp, fine, usually punctured ledge, extending a third to a half of the length of the pronotum.10

Explanate sides of the pronotum indicated by irregular, coarse and crowded punctures. Rows of punctures on the elytra less regular but very dense, the some of the punctures fine and some coarse. Upper surface dark olive green to bronze.

..... ***Chrysolina marginata***

Widespread but not particularly common.



- 10 Number of punctures in both of the outermost striae generally at least 25. Punctures in the interstices between the striae clear. Front tarsi in females (not including the claws) longer than the distance separating the antennae at their base.

..... ***Chrysolina brunsvicensis***

Widespread in Great Britain, but becoming rare towards the north.



Number of punctures in the two outer striae on the elytra generally less than 25. Elytra in females more or less matt.

..... ***Chrysolina hyperici***

Widespread in Great Britain, but becoming rare towards the north.



- 11 Upper surface with coloured longitudinal stripes. Background colour of the upper surface bright red. Each elytron with three stripes with violet centres and green borders and a similarly coloured stripe along the suture. Pronotum with one central and two lateral longitudinal stripes. Underside generally purple. Upper surface very variable in the punctures and coloration. The background colour varies from green to blue with the stripes then much less distinct or it can be purple in which case the stripes are indistinct.



..... ***Chrysolina cerealis***

On various species of Lamiaceae, such as *Thymus serpyllum*, *Calamintha nepeta*, *Satureja montana*, *Mentha longifolia*. Rare – north Wales.

Upper surface without longitudinal stripes of different colours.12



12 Body iridescent green to coppery, elytra black with a bright brassy shine. ..

..... ***Chrysolina polita***

Rare aberrations of this key to here - see couplet 2. On various labiate plants, especially *Mentha aquatica*. Widespread and common in Great Britain.

Otherwise coloured.13



- 13 Smaller species, about 6.5 mm. Elytra finely, very regularly but indistinctly double-punctured. Pronotum also uniformly densely and finely punctured (usually finer than the elytra), without an explanate edge but sometimes with a short indentation at the side near the base. Fully winged. Third segment of the maxillary palps not broader than the second. Body, legs and antennae dark with a variegated metallic sheen, coppery-red, brassy, green, blue or purple, rarely dirty brownish-black, relatively shining to almost matt. Length 4.5-6.5 mm.



..... ***Chrysolina varians***

On *Hypericum* species. Widespread in the British Isles.

Differing from the above in at least one character.14



- 14 Inner edge of the explanate side of the pronotum defined by a notch at least at the base or a line of coarse punctures. The notch is sometimes small and shallow, but then the edge is clearly angled. Explanate side of the pronotum either short and very narrow at the base or elongate towards the front and partly broad and thickened.15

Base of the pronotum without a notch or a line of punctures along the edge of the explanate margin, occasionally however with a coarsely punctured area or shallow depression. Without a clear transition to the explanate side and without coarse punctures.17



- 15 Legs and antennae brownish to yellow. 8th segment of the antennae clearly longer than wide (measured at the widest point and not including the narrower linking section). Clear inner edge of the explanate side of pronotum extends almost to the front due to a coarsely punctured, narrow to broad furrow. Last segment of the maxillary palps broadened, particularly in males.16

Legs and antennae dark, at most only paler in part.

..... ***Chrysolina cerealis***

Some forms key here. Rare – North Wales.



- 16 Upper and lower surface of the body uniformly brownish. Elytra at most with a weak brassy sheen. Pronotum with the front angles rounded; pronotum broadest in the middle. Punctures of the elytra relatively dense, clearly doubled (viewed at 10x magnification), usually irregular, but often wrinkled. Length 6-9.5 mm.

..... ***Chrysolina staphylaea***

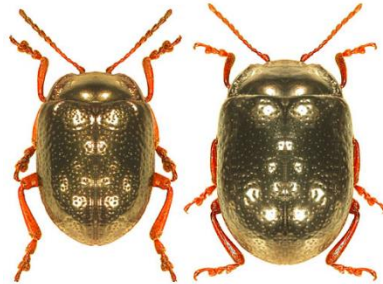
On *Mentha rotundifolia*. Widespread and common in Britain.



Body two-coloured. Underside predominantly brownish. Upper surface dark metallic (olivaceous bronze to coppery-red or purple). Pronotum broadest near the base, with the explanate edge distinctly broad and bordered with a furrow. Elytra relatively more elongate, usually coarsely punctured. Length 8-11 mm.

..... ***Chrysolina banksii***

On labiates. England, Wales and Ireland with a clear tendency to coastal habitats.



17 Legs metallic (more or less violet), with the tarsi contrasting brown to pale yellow. Upper surface uniformly densely and finely punctured, those on the elytra and pronotum similar although those on the pronotum are all single while those on the elytra are inconspicuously doubled. Elytra dull or weakly shining, bright or dull violet to greenish violet, brassy-brown, greenish or bluish. Pronotum narrowing towards the front at least from around the middle. First two segments of the antennae (rarely more than two) predominantly pale. Sexually dimorphic: the males have distinctly broadened tarsi and are considerably smaller than females. Length 6-10 mm.



..... ***Chrysolina sturmi***

Associated with *Glechoma hederaceum*, *Gallium* and *Circium*. England and Wales.

Tarsi darker, or if paler yellowish-brown then at least the tibiae are also brownish for the most part. Punctures on the pronotum and elytra clearly different from one another, or punctures on the elytra coarse and irregular or punctures much less dense.18



- 18 Punctures on the pronotum not dense, more or less irregular and generally doubled (i.e. in part similar to those on the elytra). Side margins of the pronotum commonly with very coarse punctures. More elongate-oval, fully winged species. Usually with a pale-green, golden-yellow or bluish-green metallic shine.19

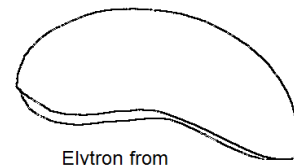
Pronotum comparatively densely and finely punctured, about twice as dense as those on the elytra and distinctly finer. Side margins in part with larger punctures but these are never coarse, not or only slightly larger than those on the elytra. Short-oval species with reduced wings. Never brightly pale-green. .

..... ***Chrysolina haemoptera***

Mostly southern England and Wales, with a tendency to coastal habitats.



19 Viewed from the side the epipleura are visible well beyond the middle of the elytra. Elytra with dense and usually distinctly deep punctures, the punctures sometimes running into one another forming wrinkles. Punctures on the top of the pronotum usually smaller than those on the elytra. Sides of the pronotum coarsely punctured. Upper surface shining metallic green, golden-green, or bluish-green (rarely faded and only slightly shining). Elytra often with a mix of green and golden-brown colour, e.g. golden brown along the suture with the rest green or the suture pale green with the rest bluish. The colour along the suture is often extended onto the shoulders, the base of the elytra or with stripes parallel to the suture. Second segment of the antennae usually mainly reddish-yellow. Very convex species. Length 8-11 mm.



Elytron from the side



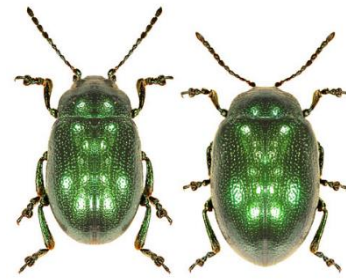
..... ***Chrysolina graminis***

Usually in moist habitats. Reportedly associated with *Tanacetum vulgare* and with various labiates including *Mentha aquatica*. Widespread in England but not common.

Viewed from the side the epipleura are only visible up to the middle. Elytra with the punctures not dense or dense; if they are dense then the elytra do not have the suture colouration as above. Punctures not noticeably deep and not forming wrinkles (except in very limited areas), commonly looking like pin-pricks.20



20 Elytra and pronotum usually strongly and densely punctured (only rarely less strongly and more scattered). Second segment of the antennae usually mostly reddish yellow. Upper surface generally uniformly green or golden-green (occasionally blue-green to blue, in which case the suture and outer angles of the elytra are partly and narrowly darker, and the second antennal segment is darker). Colour very rarely dirty olive.



..... ***Chrysolina herbacea***

On various species of mint, Common in southern England, becoming rare to the north.

Elytra and pronotum with the punctures weaker and less dense and usually extended to form tiny fissures. Second segment of the antennae mainly dark metallic. Upper surface usually shining bluish green to blue to dirty blue. Suture and outer angles of the elytra narrowly darker blue to black; edge of elytra sometimes broadly darkened and often also with a darker longitudinal smudge. Scutellum and pronotum often darker, at least at the base. Length 6-10 mm.



..... ***Chrysolina coerulans***

On various species of mint. Rare.



Genus *Chrysomela*

Adapted from Joy (1932)

- 1 Pronotum and elytra the same colour – bright green or coppery. Length 5-8 mm.

..... ***Chrysomela aenea***

Generally distributed in Britain, but much commoner north of a line between the Severn and Humber estuaries. Associated with alders.

Image © Malcolm Storey bioimages.org.uk.



Pronotum bluish or greenish; elytra reddish. Associated with willows and poplars.2

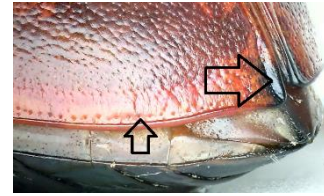


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- 2 Elytra with a small black patch at the tip alongside the suture and with a single row of punctures along the side. Length 9-12 mm.

..... ***Chrysomela populi***

Associated with willows. England and Wales.



Elytra with the tips alongside the suture the same colour as the rest. Sides of the elytra with a doubled row of punctures. Length 6-9 mm.

..... ***Chrysomela tremula***

Associated with aspen. England and Wales, but becoming rarer to the north.

