

Family Meloidae

Adapted from Joy (1932) by Mike Hackston

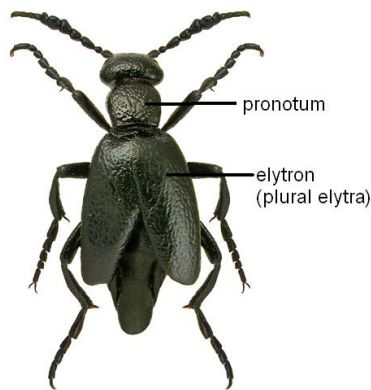
References

Joy N.H. (1932) A Practical Handbook of British Beetles, published by H. F. & G. Witherby

The four more frequently recorded species can be identified using the Buglife guide at

<http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Buglife%20oil%20beetle%20ID%20guide%20web%20lrg.pdf>.

Stanislav Krejčík has a number of photographs of beetles from this family at <http://www.meloidae.com/en/search/?q=meloe>



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

Subfamily MELOINAE Gyllenhal, 1810

Genus *LYTTA* Fabricius, 1775

vesicatoria (Linnaeus, 1758)

Genus *MELOE* Linnaeus, 1758

autumnalis Olivier, 1792

brevicollis Panzer, 1793

cicatricosus Leach, 1813

mediterraneus Müller, J., 1925

proscarabaeus Linnaeus, 1758

rugosus Marsham, 1802

variegatus Donovan, 1793

violaceus Marsham, 1802

Subfamily NEMOGNATHINAE Laporte, 1840

Genus *SITARIS* Latreille, 1802

muralis (Forster, 1771)

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Family Meloidae

Adapted from Joy (1932)

Key to genus

- 1 Elytra meeting in the middle for their entire length; beetle brilliant green.
..... ***Lytta vesicatoria***

Brilliant green, sometimes with a bluish reflection; length 12-20 mm.; South eastern England northwards to Norfolk, Ireland. Rare on ash, willow, etc.; June to August.



Elytra only meeting in the middle at the base and then separated from one another or overlapping one another at the base. All black or blue-black, occasionally with metallic reflections which may show dull green in some lights).[2](#)



- 2¹ Elytra almost touching at the base and then separating from one another and narrowing, but extending well beyond half way to the end of the abdomen. Wings present and exposed.

..... ***Sitaris muralis***

Black with base of elytra brownish-orange, or elytra and abdomen orange-brown (variety *flava* Hamm); male with antennae much longer than in female; length 7-12 mm. Southern England northwards to Gloucestershire; rare on old walls near the nests of the bees of genus *Anthophora*. July to September. Photograph from Wikipedia; a better quality photograph can be found on Stanislav Krejčík's website.



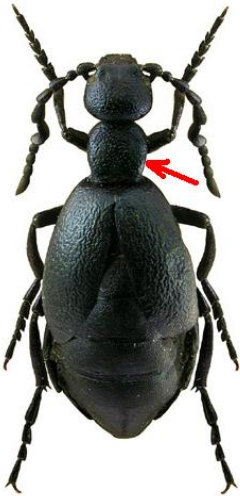
One elytra overlapping the other at the base (sometimes only briefly so); wings absent. Not showing any brownish-orange colour.

..... [Genus *Meloë*](#)



Genus *Meloë*

- 1 Pronotum as broad as long or longer. Male with segments 6 and 7 of antennae compressed which usually cause the antennae to have a kink in them (the kink is usually also present in females to a much lesser extent).[2](#)



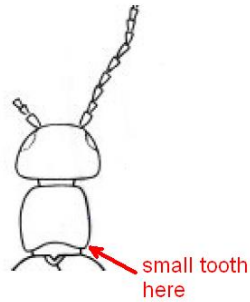
Pronotum distinctly broader than long. Male antennae with the segments rounded in section and straight.[4](#)



2¹ Rather bright blue-black. Pronotum with a transverse impression near the basal margin, flattened and very finely punctured; rear edge of the pronotum curved away from the elytra and with the hind angles with a sharp tooth. Length 10-32 mm.

..... ***Meloë violaceus***

Meadows and woodlands in western and northern Britain. March to June. Line drawing from <http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Buglife%20oil%20beetle%20OID%20guide%20web%20lrg.pdf>



Black, with a slight blue reflection. Pronotum without a transverse impression.3



3² Pronotum dorsally flattened and more strongly punctured. Base of pronotum flat and hind angles with a small indistinct rounded tooth. Elytra with a more distinct ridged sculpture. Segments 6 and 7 of antennae more compressed. Head and pronotum sometimes purplish metallic (variety *cyanea* Muls.). Length 13-32 mm.

..... ***Meloë proscarabaeus***

Meadows and coastal grassland throughout Britain, becoming less common to the north. March to June.



Pronotum more convex and finely and diffusely punctured. Elytra with the ridged sculpture indistinct. Male with segments 6 and 7 less compressed. Length 8-23 mm.

..... ***Meloë autumnalis***

Very rare with old records from Devon, Kent and Cambridgeshire; August and September.

4¹ Abdomen with a metallic shine, greenish, reddish or coppery. Sides of head and pronotum coppery.
..... ***Meloë variegatus***
Kent, Hampshire (old records), very rare.



Any metallic coloration not distinct and then black with a slight blue or violet reflection or dull.5



5⁴ Pronotum finely and diffusely punctured. Elytra with a more distinct ridged sculpture. Pronotum much narrower than the head; black, with a slight blue or violet reflection. Length 10-20 mm.

..... ***Meloë brevicollis***

Very rare. Mostly in heathland and dunes with sandy soil in south west England, Ireland and western Scotland. March to June



Pronotum with dense punctures that merge into short ridges. Ridged sculpture even more distinct.6

6⁵ Pronotum much narrower than the head. Segments of the antennae elongate. Dull black. Length 10-18 mm.7



Pronotum only slightly narrower than the head. Segments of the antennae as broad as long, or broader than long. Length 12-30 mm. Black to blue-black.
..... ***Meloë cicatricosus***
Kent, Essex; very rare.



7⁶ Pronotum with a longitudinal crease along the centre line.

..... ***Meloë rugosus***

Rare, on chalk and sandy soils and on the coast in central and southern England. Length up to 18 mm. Line drawing from <http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Buglife%20oil%20beetle%20ID%20guide%20web%20lrg.pdf>



Pronotum without a crease along the centre line.

..... ***Meloë mediterraneus***

Rediscovered in south Devon in 2012; otherwise not recorded since Kent in 1906. Photograph by John Walters.

