

Tychius

Covered in broad to hair-like flat scales. Long rostrum, antennae inserted near the tip. All are associated with legumes, and they include two very common species (*picrostris* and *junceus*) that are likely to be found on any clover patch within their range. Six of the 14 species are covered in plain yellow to whitish scales, sometimes with a paler stripe down the centre of the wing-cases. These are not easy to tell apart: differences in the shape of the body, eyes, and rostrum are important, but they are most easily appreciated by comparing specimens. The colour of the species can vary according to the condition of the scales and whether they have been lost through wear. *Tychius junceus* is particularly confusing, and you are likely to find examples that look so different from each other at first glance that you are convinced you have more than one species. In some cases you might have to dissect the specimen. The good news is that *Tychius* is one of the few genera where both aedeagus and spermatheca are useful for identification, so you do not need to worry whether you have a male or a female.

[Compare](#) *Sibinia* have each wing-case rounded at the tip, so they form a cleft where they meet.





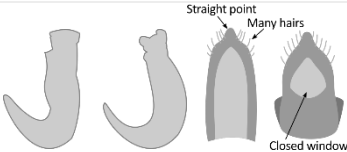
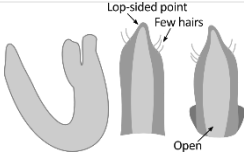


This is not yet finished as an identification guide, but it has some illustrations and comparisons that might help you tell the six tricky plain species apart.






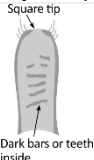
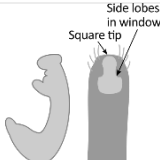
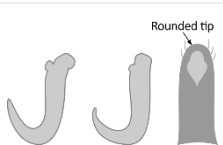
Full resolution versions of most of the images here are available at tinyurl.com/weevilalbums.

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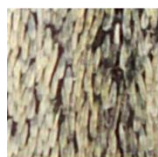
Six plain species with broad scales largely hiding the surface, and no stripes or just one stripe down the centre of the wing-cases. Tip of rostrum (beyond antenna sockets) red-brown. Surface of wing-cases often red-brown in rear half, but this often hidden under scales. Femurs red-brown except for *meliloti*. Note variability in colour and density of scales within species.

| | <i>Tychius squamulatus</i> * | <i>Tychius junceus</i> | <i>Tychius crassirostris</i> *** |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |
| Size | 2.0-3.0 mm | 2.0-2.5 mm | 2.0-2.5 mm |
| Eyes | Bulging. | Rounded to bulging. | Rounded. |
| Femurs | Red-brown. | Red-brown. | Red-brown. |
| Scales in striae | Same as intervals. | Same as intervals. | Same as intervals. |
| Antenna club | Dark | Red-brown | Dark. |
| Other features | Broad body, long rostrum, hardly tapering. Tiny tooth on underside of hind femurs. | Variable in colour and density of scales. Retroussé rostrum. | Less prominent shoulders, thicker scales, and proportionately longer body than <i>junceus</i> . Eyes more rounded than <i>breviusculus</i> . Male has brush of scales under front femurs. |
| Foodplants | Bird's-foot Trefoil <i>Lotus corniculatus</i> | Legumes | Melilots <i>Melilotus</i> |
| Spermatheca and aedeagus |  |  |  |

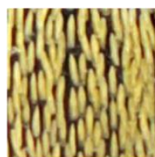
Aedeagus: tip seen from concave side, with (on right) view of convex side in *junceus* and *crassirostris*.

| | <i>Tychius stephensi</i> * | <i>Tychius meliloti</i> | <i>Tychius brevisculus</i> ** |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| |  |   |   |
| Size | 2.0-2.8 mm | 2.0-2.5 mm | 2.0-2.5 mm |
| Eyes | Flat to rounded. | Almost flat. | Almost flat |
| Femurs | Red-brown. | Dark. | Red-brown. |
| Scales in striae | Narrower. | Narrower. | Narrower. |
| Antenna club | Red-brown | Dark. | Red-brown |
| Other features | Greyish scales. From <i>picrostris pusillus</i> , and <i>tibialis</i> by paler femurs, rostrum, and antenna club. | Female rostrum sharply bent and tapered. Male with tooth on inside of front tibia. From <i>picrostris pusillus</i> , and <i>tibialis</i> by paler rostrum, and antenna club, and usually obvious stripe down wing-cases. | Flat eyes, yellowish or cream scales, wide pronotum. |
| Foodplants | Red Clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i> | Melilots <i>Melilotus</i> | Melilots <i>Melilotus</i> |
| Spermatheca and aedeagus |  |  |  |

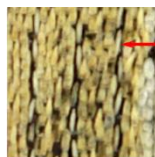
The six plain species: scales



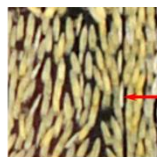
crassirostris



junceus



squamulatus



brevisculus



stephensi









meliloti

In the middle of the wing-cases, the scales of *crassirostris* and *junceus* are all more or less the same size and shape. In the other four, the scales in the striae (marked with a red arrow) are narrower and often paler than those in the intervals. These are not always easy to see. Beware that near the tip the wing-cases the scales in the striae of *junceus* may be slightly narrower than those in the middle of the wing-cases.

The six plain species: rostrums in side view

Differences between sexes are often greater than those between species. Species grouped by rostrum shape.

| | Males | Females |
|----------------------|---|---|
| <i>breviusculus</i> |  <p><i>Tychius breviusculus</i>. Not so angled as <i>crassirostris</i> and <i>junceus</i>.</p> |  <p><i>Tychius breviusculus</i>. Tapering after antennae, like <i>junceus</i> but not so retroussé.</p> |
| <i>crassirostris</i> |  <p><i>Tychius crassirostris</i>. Sharply angled on under side. Heavy tip.</p> |  <p><i>Tychius crassirostris</i>. Sharply angled on under side. Very like male <i>junceus</i>, but not so retroussé, more angled on under side, and slightly shorter and thicker.</p> |
| <i>junceus</i> |  <p><i>Tychius junceus</i>. Tapered after antennae.</p> |  <p><i>Tychius junceus</i>. Slender and tapered after antennae.</p> |

stephensi



Tychius stephensi. Rather thick, straighter than the others, darker at base.

squamulatus



Tychius squamulatus. Long, not narrowing much after antennae.

meliloti



Tychius meliloti. Sharply bent from base.



Tychius meliloti. Sharply bent from base, very slender at tip.

The six plain species: body shape



squamulatus

Pronotum with rather straight sides at base.



junceus

Wide pronotum and wing-cases. Pronotum sides evenly rounded, appear rather swollen.



crassirostris

Pronotum slightly longer than *junceus* or *breviusculus*, wing-cases narrower and more oval, shoulders not prominent.



stephensi

Wing-cases with rather straight sides, shoulders not prominent.





meliloti

Prominent shoulders, pronotum proportionately narrower at base compared to wing-cases.



brevisculus

Pronotum swollen in front half, straighter sides in rear half.

The six plain species: eyes

Eye shape is an important character among the plain species. It is rather variable in *junceus*, but the eyes are always more rounded than the outline of the head, whereas in *meliloti* and *breviusculus* they more or less follow the outline of the head and do not protrude at all. This is a useful field character. Species arranged from most bulging to flattest eyes.

Bulging



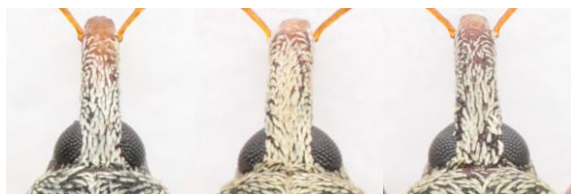
squamulatus

Bulging to rounded



junceus

Rounded



crassirostris

Slightly rounded to almost flat



stephensi

Almost flat



meliloti



breviusculus