



BWARS

Information Sheet

IVY BEE (*Colletes hederæ*)

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- * Safe with children and with pets
- * Important wild pollinator of Ivy
- * New coloniser of the UK
- * **Can you add to our knowledge and help plot the spread?**

Featuring:

- Background information
- Distribution in UK and the world
- Habitat requirements
- Conservation

History and Distribution

The Ivy Bee (*Colletes hederæ*) was described as new to science in 1993 from specimens found in southern Europe. The first British records were reported from Worth Matravers (Dorset) in September 2001. Subsequent searches in 2001 showed the bee to be plentiful over much of Purbeck and to be present in a single Devon locality.

In the years following its discovery, it has been found all along the south coast, from Cornwall to Kent, and also in Wiltshire (where it is common in the Salisbury area), Somerset, Surrey and Essex. The bee is abundant in the Channel Islands.

On continental Europe, the species has undergone a rapid expansion of its range and is now known from Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Spain.

There is a single flight period each year, and peak activity matches the flowering period of its key pollen forage plant, Ivy (*Hedera helix*). The species is on the wing from early September (in the warmest sites) until early November.

Habitat and Conservation

Colletes hederæ nests in loose (often sandy) soil, and prefers sparsely vegetated south-facing banks and cliffs. The bees often nest in huge, dense aggregations in suitable places and nests can easily number into the thousands.

The males emerge first and are followed by the females. Pollen foraging is almost always restricted to flowering stands of Ivy.

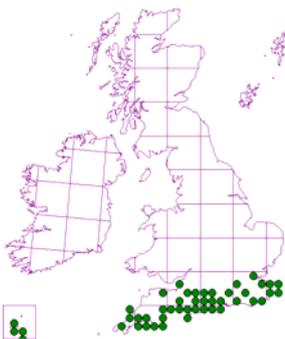
In order to encourage this bee, south facing banks on light soils should be mown to keep the vegetation short. Ivy is essential to the success of the bee, and large stands should be allowed to flower in the vicinity of nests.



A female of *Colletes hederæ* foraging for pollen at Ivy



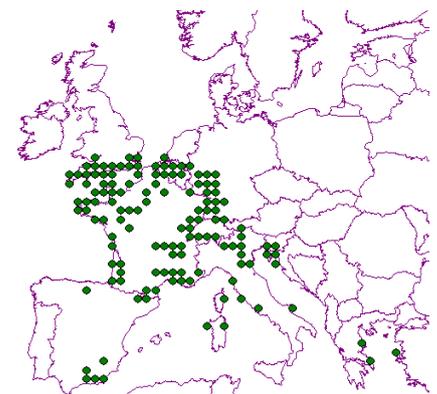
Mating cluster of *Colletes hederæ*



UK distribution at the end of 2009



C. hederæ nests



Recorded world distribution, 2009

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BWARS, The Bees Wasps & Ants Recording Society is the national recording scheme which provides the only source of fully validated data on the UK bee, wasp & ant fauna.

<http://www.bwars.com/>

For further information and submission of records and photographs,

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