

## *Calosoma inquisitor* Lesser Searcher

*Calosoma* are closely related to *Carabus*. They can be told apart by the shape of their pronotum which is much wider than it is long. Both species are fully-winged (they have transparent hind-wings folded up under the elytra) and are strong fliers.



16-22 mm



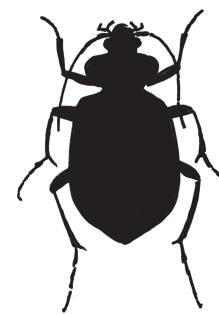
*Calosoma inquisitor* Lesser Searcher



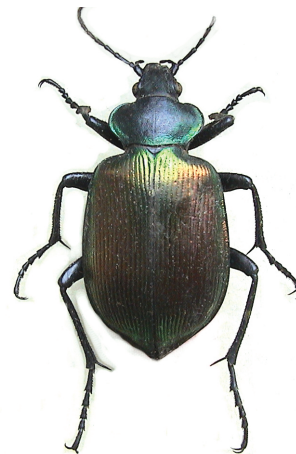
## *Calosoma sycophanta* The Sycophant

The two British species are easily identified. *Calosoma inquisitor* is **smaller** than *sycophanta*. It has **bronze** upperparts with metallic green borders to the elytra. It is a scarce species found in ancient woodlands throughout Britain. It is mainly active in May and June and is best found by searching tree trunks after dark. The beetles emerge from the soil at dusk and climb trees (especially oaks) to hunt for caterpillars.

*Calosoma sycophanta* is much larger in size with **metallic green** and **copper** markings. It is a rare vagrant to Britain.



24-30mm



*Calosoma sycophanta*  
The Sycophant

## *Cychrus caraboides* Buzzing Snail-hunter

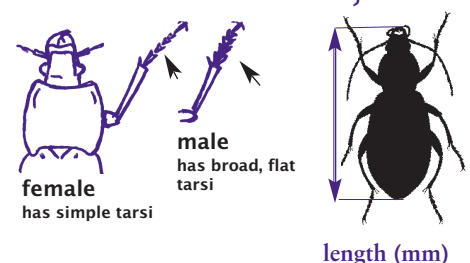
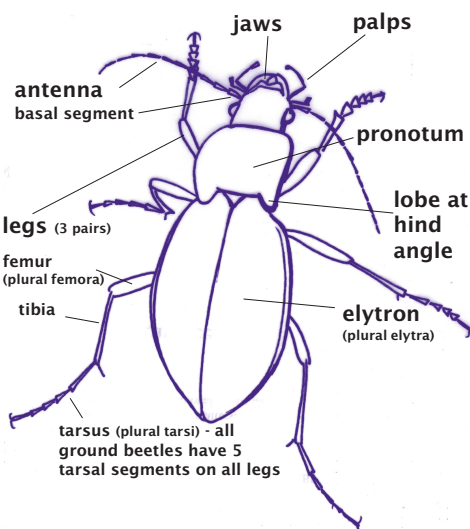
Resembles a small *Carabus*. All black with a **bulbous** body. The **elytra** are **fused** together and have a granular surface. Has a distinctive shape with **narrow pronotum** and **head**. Often makes a **buzzing sound** when picked up. Feeds on slugs and snails. Common, mainly found in damp woodlands and upland grasslands.



16-22 mm



*Cychrus caraboides*  
Buzzing Snail-hunter



length (mm)

### Finding ground beetles

These beetles are mainly active between March and October. They are occasionally found active by day but most species are nocturnal. Searching on paths and tree trunks with a torch after dark is an excellent way to find them. They can also be found sheltering under stones, moss and dead bark.

Using a baited pitfall trap is also an effective method to catch them. Take care when handling these beetles as they are capable of spraying an acid-like liquid from the tip of the abdomen. Some species hibernate under clumps of moss and dead rotten bark on tree stumps and can be found throughout the winter. Take care to replace bark and moss as you found it.

### Recommended books on British ground beetles

Martin Luff (2007), *The Carabidae (ground beetles) of Britain and Ireland, Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects, Vol.4, Part 2 (2nd Edition)*, Royal Entomological Society ISBN 978 090154 686 9  
The essential guide to the identification of all the British species.

Martin Luff (1998), *Provisional atlas of the ground beetles (Coleoptera, Carabidae) of Britain*, Biological Records Centre ISBN 1 870393 41 4

Distribution maps of all the British species. An excellent aid when attempting to identify ground beetles.

Thanks to Brian Bewsher, Dave Boyce and Mark Telfer for their comments and suggestions during the preparation of the guide.



Baited pitfall trap. A plastic pot with drainage holes punched in the bottom buried with surface flush with the soil. Put some damp soil and a flat stone in the base of it and a slice of apple (food for the beetles). Place a plastic bottle half-filled with chopped apple with a few holes punched below the lid beside the trap. The odour of the fermented apple attracts the beetles. Netting placed over the plastic pot prevents small mammals and reptiles from entering. Check regularly - at least once a week.

## Guides to British Beetles

### 1. *Carabus*, *Calosoma* and *Cychrus* Ground Beetles (Coleoptera; Carabidae)



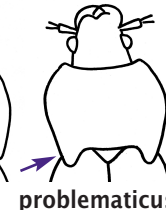
Over 350 species of ground beetle occur in Britain. This guide should enable identification of some of the largest and most attractive of these including the 10 native (and 3 introduced) *Carabus*, both *Calosoma* and the single *Cychrus* species.

#### *Carabus violaceus* Violet Ground Beetle

Similar to *problematicus* but has **dull** almost smooth elytra with **fine granules** on the surface which form **indistinct lines**. **Pronotum** with **violet** colour along **sides** only. The lobes at the hind-angles of the pronotum are further apart than in *problematicus* (see diagrams). The elytra have **violet** markings confined to the **side margins** - occasionally this colour can look blue or green. All black individuals can occur but are rare (see *Carabus glabratus*). Common, found in a variety of habitats including woodlands, grasslands and gardens.



violaceus



problematicus



20-30 mm



*Carabus violaceus* Violet Ground Beetle



#### *Carabus problematicus* Ridged Violet Ground Beetle

Has **shiny** elytra with **distinct ridges**. Pronotum with **extensive violet** areas. The pronotum is narrower at the base than in *violaceus* (see diagram). The elytra have more extensive **violet** markings than *violaceus*. Common, found in a variety of habitats including woodlands, grasslands and heathland. Rarely found in gardens.



20-28 mm

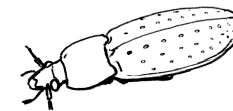


*Carabus problematicus* Ridged Violet Ground Beetle



#### *Carabus nemoralis* Bronze Ground Beetle

Similar to *violaceus* and *problematicus* but with **bronze elytra** with three distinct **rows of pits** on each side. Violet markings on edge of pronotum and sides of elytra. Broad pronotum. Colour can be duller than shown here. Common, found in a variety of habitats including woodlands, grasslands and gardens.



20-26 mm



*Carabus nemoralis* Bronze Ground Beetle



#### *Carabus intricatus* Blue Ground Beetle

Distinct **blue-violet** colour on **roughly sculptured** upperside. **Pronotum** narrow and square-shaped. Head with **large protruding jaws**. Antennae and legs longer than in other *Carabus*. The femora of the legs are particularly long and the whole insect has a flattened appearance. Very rare and confined to a few ancient woodlands in Devon, Cornwall and Glamorgan. Lives mainly on trees and hunts slugs.



25-35 mm



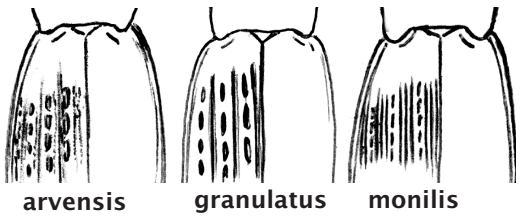
*Carabus intricatus* Blue Ground Beetle





*Carabus arvensis* Moorland Ground Beetle

**Variable** in colour, usually **copper** but can be brown, green, blue or black. **Pronotum with rounded sides.** Elytra with long granules like strings of sausages separated by **two or three broken ridges.** Similar to *granulatus* and *monilis* - see below and compare the pronotum shape and sculpture patterns on elytra. Occurs on heaths and moors throughout most of Britain but is scarce in East Anglia and the Midlands.



16-20 mm

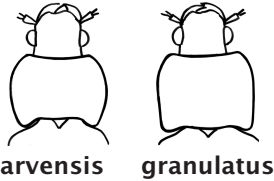


*Carabus arvensis* Moorland Ground Beetle

*Carabus granulatus* Sausage Ground Beetle

**Copper coloured** with a slight greenish reflection. **Pronotum with almost straight sides.** Elytra with long granules like strings of sausages separated by **single ridges.**

Widespread and common in wet habitats such as marshes and bogs.



16-23 mm



*Carabus granulatus* Sausage Ground Beetle

*Carabus monilis* Necklace Ground Beetle

**Copper coloured** with a slight greenish reflection. **Pronotum with rounded sides.** Elytra with rows of short granules separated by **three fine ridges.**

Occurs in grasslands in England and Wales. A scarce and local species which has declined significantly in the last fifty years.



22-26 mm



*Carabus monilis* Necklace Ground Beetle

*Carabus clatratus* Golden-dimpled Ground Beetle

**Copper coloured** with distinct rows of **golden** coloured deep **pits** on elytra between ridges. **Pronotum broad with almost straight sides.** Scarce and northern in distribution. Found in bogs and by fresh water in Scotland - mainly on the coast.



22-30 mm



*Carabus clatratus* Golden-dimpled Ground Beetle

*Carabus cancellatus* Immigrant Sausage Ground Beetle

Similar to other species on this page but identified by the **red basal segment** to the **antennae**, the **red femora** and the very **broad pronotum.** An introduced species which has occurred on farmland in the past but has not been seen in Britain since 1895.



17-32 mm



*Carabus cancellatus* Immigrant Sausage Ground Beetle

*Carabus nitens* Heath Goldsmith

A very distinctive species with **jewel-like** colouration. The pronotum and sides of elytra are **copper** coloured. The elytra are **metallic green** with three black ridges on each side. **Black legs.** The smallest native *Carabus*.

Found on wet heaths and moors mainly in northern England. Also found in the New Forest, Hampshire and on the Dorset heaths. One record from Devon on Dartmoor.



13-18 mm



*Carabus nitens* Heath Goldsmith

*Carabus auratus* The Goldsmith

Superficially similar to *Carabus nitens* but much larger. **Legs** and **basal segments** of **antennae** are **red.** Ridges on elytra are metallic coloured as rest of surface.

An introduced species which is currently known from Berkshire and north Essex where it is found in gardens.



20-27 mm



*Carabus auratus* The Goldsmith

*Carabus glabratus* Smooth Ground Beetle

**All black** with a slight blue reflection. **Smooth** **silky** upperside. Can be told from all-black *violaceus* by the **elytra** which are **fused together** along the mid-line and its more convex shape.

A nothern montane species found on moorland and in woods.



22-30 mm



*Carabus glabratus* Smooth Ground Beetle

*Carabus convexus* Winstanley Ground Beetle

Only recorded at Winstanley Park, Wigan, Lancashire in 1836 probably as an introduction. Similar to *glabratus* but smaller in size with blue colour on pronotum and edges of elytra.



14-20 mm



*Carabus convexus* Winstanley Ground Beetle