



BWARS

Information Sheet

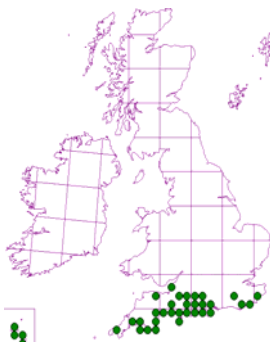
IVY BEE (*Colletes hederæ*)

Stuart Roberts & Nicolas Vereecken

- * Safe with Children and Pets
- * Important wild pollinator of Ivy
- * New coloniser of the UK
- * **Can you add to our knowledge?**

Featuring:

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



UK distribution of *C. hederæ*



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



Mating cluster of *Colletes hederæ*

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 Salis-

bury area), Somerset and Surrey.

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, 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 mid-September 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

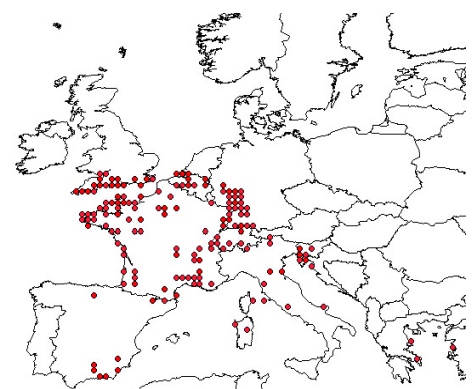
stands of Ivy.

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.

The bees are harmless and completely safe with children and pets



C. hederæ nests



Recorded world distribution

Hymettus Ltd is the premier source of advice on the conservation of bees, wasps and ants within Great Britain and Ireland.

<http://hymettus.org.uk/>

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/>

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