

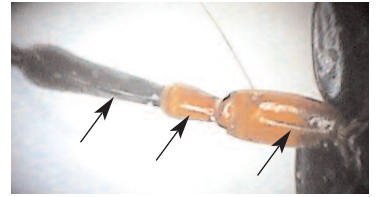
Guides to British Beetles

10. *Poecilus* Greenclocks Ground Beetles (Coleoptera; Carabidae)



Poecilus is a genus of 4 medium-sized (9 – 15 mm) diurnal ground beetles with metallic upperparts. Until the 1990s, *Poecilus* was treated by British coleopterists as a subgenus of *Pterostichus* but has now been raised to generic rank.

They differ from *Pterostichus* by their metallic upperparts and by having keels on top of the three basal antennal segments. *Pterostichus* are never metallic (though a few species are iridescent) and don't have keels on their antennae. Colour is very variable in *Poecilus* and it is possible to find unmetallic individuals; the antennal keels help to separate these from *Pterostichus*. This guide will enable identification of the 4 *Poecilus* species found in Britain.



Poecilus - keel on three basal segments of antennae.

Quick guide to identification - check colour of antennae:

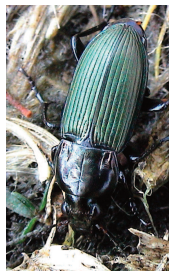
basal two segments of antennae clear red-brown = *cupreus* and *versicolor*

basal two segments of antennae dark brown above, clear red-brown below = *kugelanni*

all segments of antennae black = *lepidus*

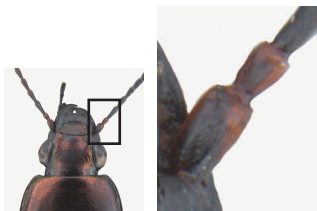
Poecilus kugelanni Kugelann's Greenclock

Similar to *cupreus* and *versicolor* but **two basal segments of antennae dark-brown above and clear red-brown below**. Variable in colour, typical individuals are bi-coloured with metallic green elytra and copper coloured pronotum. Uniform brown and black individuals occur. **Larger** than *cupreus* and *versicolor* with **foveae on pronotum more deeply impressed**. The **elytral striae are finely but evidently punctate**. Hind-wings fully developed.



Poecilus kugelanni Kugelann's Greenclock

Rare, found on a few warm heathlands in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire and Norfolk. There are old records from Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex, Middlesex and Nottinghamshire.



Basal segments of antennae are dark brown above and clear red-brown below.

Poecilus lepidus Heath Greenclock

Separated from all other *Poecilus* by the **completely black antennae**. Variable in colour from metallic green to pink-brown. Black individuals occur. **Larger** than *cupreus* and *versicolor* with **foveae on pronotum more deeply impressed**. More elongate in appearance than *kugelanni*. The **elytral striae impunctate or almost so**. Hind-wings usually quite reduced.



Poecilus lepidus Heath Greenclock

Scarce, occurs on heathlands and most frequently found on the heaths of Hampshire (The New Forest), Dorset and the North York Moors.



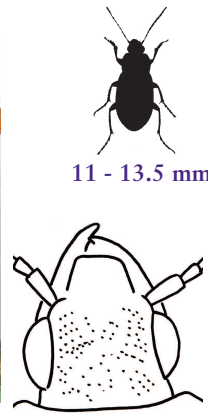
Basal segments of antennae are all black.

Poecilus cupreus Copper Greenclock

Similar to *versicolor*. Head distinctly pitted. The 8 - 11 bristles on inside of hind-tibiae are pale and hair-like. Very variable in colour from metallic green, blue to pink-brown, occasionally all black. Usually uniform in colour but bi-coloured individuals which resemble *kugelanni* occur. Larger than *versicolor*. The elytral striae have very few pits along them. Hind-wings fully-developed, flies readily.



Head distinctly pitted. 2 basal segments of antennae clear red-brown.



11 - 13.5 mm



Poecilus cupreus Copper Greenclock

Common in open habitats such as fields and gardens in southern England and Wales, scarce in northern areas.

Poecilus leg bristles. It is possible and safer to count the bristle-bearing pits rather than the bristles themselves (which are easily broken off or glued flat) but they are more difficult to see.

Note: if there are 8 bristles on the inside of the hind-tarsi, check the basal setae (arrowed in illustrations) on both legs. If they are very short (less than half the length of the others) this will be *versicolor*.

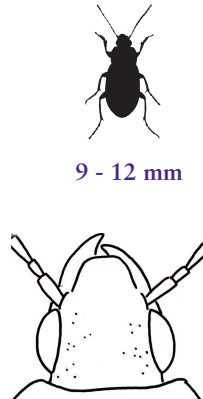


Poecilus versicolor Rainbow Greenclock

Similar to *cupreus*. Head almost smooth with much finer pits than on *cupreus*. The 5 - 8 bristles on inside of hind-tibiae are black and stouter than in *cupreus* (see photos). Very variable in colour from metallic green, blue to pink-brown, occasionally all black. Often has rainbow colours on upperparts which resemble the colours in oily puddles (see photos). Smaller than *cupreus*. The elytral striae are finely punctured. Hind-wings fully developed.



Head very finely pitted. 2 basal segments of antennae clear red-brown.



9 - 12 mm

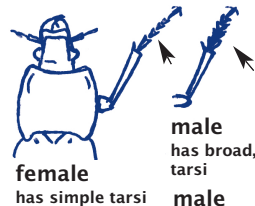
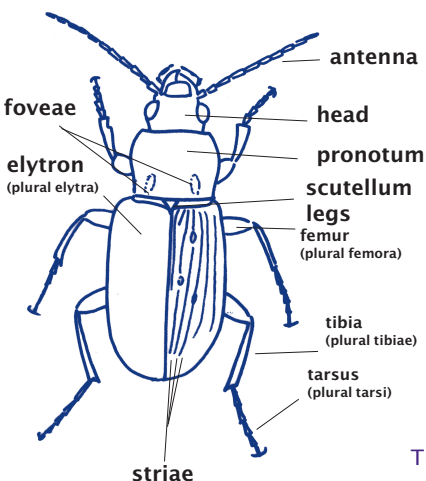


Poecilus versicolor Rainbow Greenclock

Common on heathland, moorland and damp grasslands throughout Britain.



5 - 8 bristles on inside of hind-tibia. (Basal seta arrowed).



Thanks to Oxford University Museum of Natural History for help during the preparation of this guide.