

The first record of Rosemary Beetle *Chrysolina americana* in VC 37 known to the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre.

Des Jennings

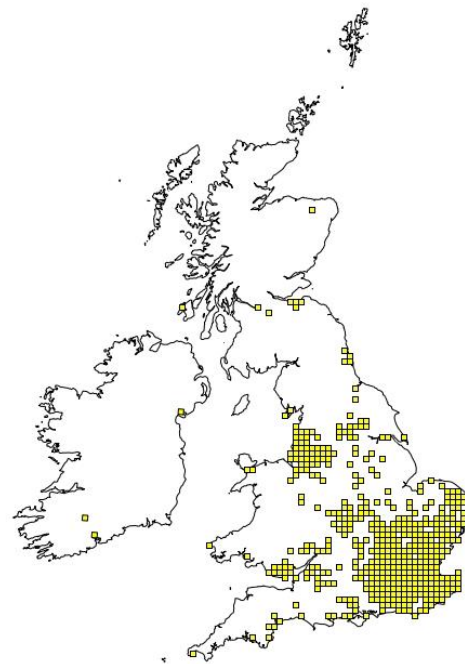
The front garden of my home in Moseley, Birmingham, has two fairly lengthy stretches of mature Lavender *Lavandula* sp. and this fragrant flower has proved popular with a number of insect species including butterflies, bees, wasps and ladybirds.

In late June, the 27th in fact, the lavender was flowering well and so I was not surprised when I was told by my eight-year old neighbour of an unusual looking insect she had seen feeding on the flowers. As I approached the lavender my first thought, given the insect's shape, was that it might be a ladybird, but closer inspection soon quashed that idea. It was time to take a photograph so that I could scrutinise the insect in more detail. As (01) shows, the metallic green shell is lined with red stripes punctured with dots, and it was very much a new insect to me. Research on the internet (my reference material does not include this relatively new beetle to the UK) soon revealed the facts: it was a Rosemary Beetle *Chrysolina americana* an insect from southern and eastern Europe first recorded in UK in 1994 at Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Wisley, Surrey. It has gradually moved north and is currently well north of VC 37 (02). The Rosemary Beetle is a pest and can damage a number of aromatic plants if not dealt with – sage, thyme, rosemary AND lavender - and there were at least a dozen on my plants already!!



01. Rosemary Beetle *Chrysolina americana* feeding on lavender *Lavandula* sp. Moseley, Birmingham. D. Jennings.

The first record of Rosemary Beetle in VC 37 has long been anticipated and Gary Farmer alerted *Worcestershire Record* readers in 2012 of the likelihood of its occurrence. In fact there is a record of Rosemary Beetle seen in Redditch in 2014, but the record was not submitted to the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre. The finder notified the RHS and it was only after finding the beetle this year that the picture became clearer regarding its status in Worcestershire VC 37. In addition, whilst putting this paper together, I discovered that a beetle was recorded in Halesowen in June 2011 and once again the record had been submitted via the RHS to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway. No doubt it was the RHS's request for sightings of the beetle's advancement in the UK that accounts for the RHS records.



02. Map showing the distribution of *Chrysolina americana* according to NBN August 2015. Courtesy of NBN Gateway.

References:

Farmer, Gary 2012 .Is the Rosemary Rainbow Beetle *Chrysolina americana* at large in Worcestershire? *Worcestershire Record* 33:34-35.
 NBN Gateway August 2015 <http://nbn.org.uk/> via email.
 Royal Horticultural Society. www.rhs.org.uk

Another record

***Chrysolina americana* in Stourbridge August 2015.**

On 6th August 2015 Brett Westwood found and photographed (03) a single Rosemary Beetle on Lavender in St Thomas' churchyard in the centre of Stourbridge, West Midlands.



03. *Chrysolina americana* in Stourbridge August 2015. B Westwood

Images

01. Rosemary Beetle *Chrysolina americana* feeding on lavender. D. Jennings.

02. *Chrysolina americana* NBN map August 2015.

03. *Chrysolina americana* in Stourbridge August 2015. B
Westwood