

Common Red Soldier Beetle

Rhagonycha fulva

Insects · Active Jun–Aug



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A slim, soft-bodied beetle, orange-red with distinctly black tips to the wing cases. It swarms in high summer on umbellifers — hogweed, cow parsley, angelica — along verges, hedgerows and rough ground around Dumfries, often in considerable numbers. It is entirely harmless, and its old nickname reflects how often it is seen mating in the open.

BEHAVIOUR

Adults are predators of small insects taken on flower heads, and also feed on pollen and nectar, so they are useful pollinators as well. The peak is short — a few weeks in July — and pairs are conspicuous on umbellifer flowers throughout it. The larvae are quite different: dark, velvety and predatory, living in soil and leaf litter through the winter, eating slugs and other soil invertebrates.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Soldier beetles (Cantharidae)
SIZE	8–10 mm
STATUS	Native; abundant in high summer

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