

Information Sheet

April 2010



BWARS

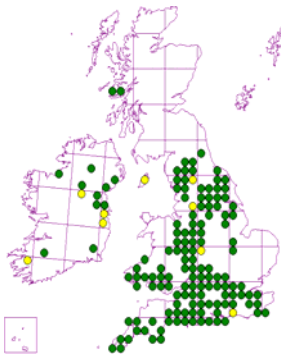
ASHY MINING-BEE (*Andrena cineraria*)

Stuart Roberts

- * Safe with Children and with Pets
- * Important wild pollinator of Fruit trees
- * Distinctive coloration
- * **Can you add to our knowledge?**

Featuring:

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



UK distribution of *Andrena cineraria*



A female of *Andrena cineraria* at *Limnanthes* flower



Male *A. cineraria* nectaring at Celandine flower



Background and Distribution

The Ashy Mining-bee (*Andrena cineraria*) is one of the most distinctive and obvious of all the spring-flying solitary bee species over much of Britain and Ireland, and over recent years has been enjoying a marked increase in abundance in parts of its range.

The females are black, and have two broad ashy-grey hairbands across the thorax. The males are similar, but the thorax is entirely clothed with less dense grey hairs, and has a very pronounced tuft of white hairs on the lower face.

In Europe, the species is widespread and common from Ireland eastwards across central Europe and into Scandinavia. It is more restricted, but still widespread in the Mediterranean region.

The bee has a single flight period each year and is on the wing from early April until early June; the males emerging well before the females. Peak activity coincides with the flowering periods of fruit trees such as Pear, Cherry and Apple.

The bees are non-aggressive and safe with children

Habitat and Conservation

Andrena cineraria nests are constructed in the ground, and the nest entrances are surrounded by a volcano-like mound of excavated spoil. Nests are often in dense aggregations in tended lawns, flower beds, mown banks and in sparsely vegetated field margins. The bee is common in gardens, parks, calcareous grassland, orchards and on the edges of cropped agricultural land.

Pollen is collected from a wide range of plants which includes flowering trees and shrubs, weeds and garden species.

In some areas, *A. cineraria* plays host to the uncommon cuckoo bee *Nomada lathburiana*.



Cuckoo bee *Nomada lathburiana*
The special parasite of *A. cineraria*



Male *A. cineraria* at nest entrance

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/>

For further information and r submission of records
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