

The Key below covers the majority of species that have been recorded from Ireland. A few of the inclusions have only very old records (e.g. 24-spot) but are placed in the Key to cover the possibility that they have been overlooked in recent years and may be present but very local.



At this point it is not intended to include all the British species but if a specimen you have fails to key out satisfactorily please try one of the web sites for British ladybirds listed in Links.






The key is not infallible. Some ladybirds species are very variable in both ground colour and spotting. An inventory, of Irish colour forms would be desirable but is not available, nor likely to become available for some time. Please bear this in mind.






The key is described as a dichomotous key where the user is confronted with descriptors which are in pairs and has to decide which one of the alternatives is the correct one. For example, in couplet 1 if the ladybird is hairy etc. then it is a 24-spot. If it is hairless and shining continue on to couplet 2 which leads to either couplet 3 or couplet 6, and so on, until you have finally identified your specimen.





If you have a specimen that does not easily match anything in the key it is best to let an expert see it rather than make assumptions about its identity.





(!) indicates unusual or rare varieties

1	Upper surface finely <u>hairy</u> ; with a up to 24 black spots; ground colour a dirty brown-red	24-spot <i>Subcoccinella 24-punctata</i>	
	Upper surface completely <u>hairless</u> , shining	2	
2	Elytra coloured <u>black</u>	3	
	Elytra <u>paler</u> -coloured, yellow, brown, orange, red, not black	6	
3	With <u>pale markings</u> (yellow,orange,red) <u>at the forward angle</u> of the elytra	4	
	<u>Pale markings</u> , if present, <u>never at the forward angle</u> of the elytra	5	
4	<u>Legs and underside of abdomen black</u> ; may have one, two or three pale markings on each elytron; if one, this is at the forward angle; if two, second is central; if three, third is at tip of	2-spot <i>Adalia bipunctata</i>	

	elytron		2-spot [melanic]
	<u>Legs brown; underside of abdomen dark brown to orange; elytra usually has only one marking which is broad and curved inwards and forwards from the margin</u>	10-spot <i>Adalia 10-punctata</i>	 10-spot *
5	<u>Body oval with no lip at elytral margins; usually a uniform black, occasionally with small tan markings at the tips of the elytra or (even rarer) at the middle of the sides</u>	Hieroglyphic <i>Coccinella hieroglyphica</i>	 Hieroglyphic [melanic]
	<u>Body round and domed; with a well-defined lip around the margins of the elytra; markings always present; form a thin red band or a thin line of small red spots across the middle of the elytra</u>	Heather <i>Chilocorus bipustulatus</i>	 Heather
6	<u>Elytra a bright orange-red to red colour</u>	7	
	<u>Elytra some other colour – cream, yellow, brown</u>	14	
7	<u>Spots on elytra pale, 7 or 8 on each elytron; size large (up to 7mm)</u>	Eyed <i>Anatis ocellata(!)</i>	
	<u>Spots on elytra black</u>	8	
8	<u>Scutellum with a large black spot extending on to each elytron and smaller triangular white spots on the outer sides of this</u>	9	 11-spot
	<u>Large scutellar spot absent, or present but without the triangular outer white spots</u>	13	
9	<u>Definitely more elongate than the common ladybirds, nearly twice as long as broad; usually with six black spots on each elytron as well as the spot at the scutellum</u>	13-spot <i>Hippodamia 13-punctata</i>	

			13-spot *
	Much less than twice as long as broad; rounded oval shape	10	
10	Less than 5mm long	11	
	More than 5.5mm long	12	
11	With five round spots on each elytron plus scutellar spot; hindmost spots on elytra are occasionally fused to form a black bar; body slightly elongate	11-spot Coccinella 11-punctata	 11-spot *
	With three black spots on each elytron plus the scutellar spot; the foremost spot is usually elongate, forming a dark bar; ground colour often less clear red, more bronze or brown	Hieroglyphic Coccinella hieroglyphica	 Hieroglyphic
12	Each elytron with 7 or 8 black spots usually (not always) ringed with cream or yellow; pronotum distinctively marked	Eyed Anatis ocellata	 Eyed
	Each elytron with 3 black spots plus scutellar spot; never ringed paler; pronotum different	7-spot Coccinella 7-punctata	 7-spot
13	Legs black; underside of abdomen black; markings variable but usually with a single black spot in the middle of each elytron	2-spot Adalia 2-punctata	
	Legs some shade of brown though may be blackened on the femora; underside of abdomen brown to orange; spots variable, from 2 to 12 and may form a checker pattern	10-spot Adalia 10-punctata	 10-spot typical
1 4	Elytra unmarked except perhaps for some darkening at the suture (where the elytra touch)		1 5

	<u>Elytra with definite darker or lighter spots</u>		1 6
15	Elytra light brown to pinkish; sometimes with a dark smudge at the suture; <u>pronotum with a distinctive M-shaped marking</u>		Larch <i>Aphidecta obliterata</i> 
	Elytra yellow, orange, orange-brown or reddish; <u>pronotum different</u> – with five dark marks		10-spot <i>Adalia 10-punctata</i>
16	<u>Body elongate and rather flattened</u> ; ground colour buff with reddish or yellowish tinge; nine black spots on each elytron plus scutellar spot		Water <i>Anisosticta 19-punctata</i> 
	<u>Body domed and a rounded oval shape</u>		17
17	<u>Spots black</u>	18	
	<u>Spots pale</u>	20	
18	<u>Femora of hind legs predominantly black</u> ; underside of abdomen mainly black; colour of elytra yellow, orange, orange-brown, red-brown; markings very variable – spots may be small or large or mixed, from 2-12 in total, or there may be a dark checkered pattern		10-spot <i>Adalia 10-punctata</i>
	<u>Femora of hind legs yellow, orange or brown</u> ; underside of abdomen predominantly orange or brown but may be blackish with an orange tip		19
19	Elytra bright yellow; with <u>11 round black spots</u> on each		22-spot <i>Thea 22-punctata</i> 
	Elytra yellowish to cream with distinctly <u>rectangular black markings</u> , often fused to form a characteristic checkered pattern		14-spot <i>Propylea 14-punctata</i> 

20	Ground colour of elytra <u>orange</u> ; with 8, occasionally 7, white spots on each elytron	Orange <i>Halysia 16-guttata</i>	 Orange
	Ground colour of elytra <u>maroon</u> , purple-brown, red-brown to dark brown	21	
21	Lacking any white spots or patches near or beside the <u>scutellum</u> ; elytra maroon or brown with 5 cream, yellow or orange spots on each	10-spot <i>Adalia 10-punctata</i> (!)	 10-spot [pale spotted]
	With white spots or markings around the <u>scutellum</u>	22	
22	Spots streaked or elongated, never all rounded	Striped <i>Myrrha oblongoguttata</i>	 Striped
	Spots rounded, rarely several fused to look like streaks	23	
23	With 6 whitish spots on each elytron plus a <u>rounded scutellar spot on each side of the scutellum</u> ; pronotum with white only at the hind corners	Cream-spot <i>Calvia 14-guttata</i>	 Cream-spot
	With about 5 whitish spots on elytra plus a series of <u>fused spots on each side of the scutellum forming a distinctive zigzag shape</u> ; pronotum broadly pale along the front margin	18-spot <i>Myrrha 18-guttata</i>	 18-spot

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