

Solitary Bees: Identification and Ecology



The location of many of John Constable's paintings, Flatford Mill runs over 120 Natural History and Arts courses in a unique and tranquil learning environment.

Course Overview

This course will introduce participants to the identification and ecology of solitary bees including nesting and foraging requirements, hosts and associated aculeate nest parasites.

Introduction to the identification of genera and species will be through a combination of presentations, field visits and microscope workshops using keys and prepared specimens.

By the end of the course participants should be more confident in identifying the more commonly encountered genera and a number of species.

Course Description

The major part of the course will focus on using the new Steven Falk keys to identify specimens down to species.

Time will be put aside for those who are less familiar with the group to work through keys to genera before advancing on to species identification.

Field visits to a variety of habitats will cover ecology and field identification to genera or species where possible. Narrowing specimens down certainly helps to make later identification a lot easier.

Participants should leave the course with the confidence to work through the key understanding the terminology and the features used to successfully identify a number of species.

For specimens that are more difficult knowing where to go for help will enable individuals to progress with the group.

About the Tutors

Ian Cheeseborough is self-employed in the field of habitat management and entomological surveys, mainly in Shropshire. He has been studying Aculeate Hymenoptera – bees, wasps and ants for the past seventeen years and is County Recorder for this group of insects. He also runs a number of courses on Aculeates at Preston Montford FSC. Ian will be accompanied by Rebecca Cartwright, who used to work for FSC at Rhyd-y-Creiau.

Bex Cartwright has been studying and recording aculeates for the last 8 years. She has an MSc in Invertebrate Ecology and Conservation and was a participant on the FSC 'Invertebrate Challenge' project 2011-2014. She has been assisting Ian on these courses for the last three years. She currently works for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust as a Conservation Officer.

What to Bring

An entomological net for field trips.

A hand lens x10 or higher.

If you can bring your own microscope you may find this beneficial, although there are some available at the Centre.

A copy of the new Steven Falk book – **A Field Guide to the Bees of Britain and Ireland**, British Wildlife Publishing.

Bees of Surrey. David W. Baldock – published by Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Have a good browse of the **BWARS** website. Bee, Wasp and Ant Recording Society

Start and finish times

Check in is from **1600** on Wednesday, but the first formal activity is dinner at **1900** (with the bar open from **18:45**), followed by an evening classroom session.

Residents: Please aim to arrive on Wednesday between **1600 and 1800** to allow us sufficient time to show you to your accommodation and around the communal areas.

Non-residents: You do not need to arrive quite so early but please can you be here by **1800** as we need to show you the communal areas as well.

The course ends at **1600** on Monday.

Special Offer

Bring a friend!

If you are attending a course at Flatford Mill at the sole occupancy price, we are offering a special rate for a friend or partner not enrolled on the course to also stay at £50 per night for dinner, bed and breakfast.

How to book

Bookings can be made by telephoning the Centre; we are open 0930 – 1700 weekdays and most weekends. Alternatively, bookings can be made via our website: www.field-studies-council.org.

