

Green Tiger Beetle

Cicindela campestris



Tiger beetles are a large group of beetles known for their aggressive predatory habits and running speed. The fastest species of tiger beetle can run at a speed of 9km/h, which, relative to its body length, is about 22 times the speed of former Olympic sprinter, Michael Johnson, the equivalent of a human running at 770km per hour.

As of 2005, about 2,600 species and subspecies were known, with the richest diversity in the Indo-Malayan region, followed by the Neotropics. In Ireland the tiger beetle shares the same basic shape with other types of beetles in Ireland, six legs, a rounded shiny body with hard wing cases but tiger beetles also have very long legs and bulging eyes.

Tiger beetles in Ireland can be orange, red, or blue in colour but green is the most common. Adult Green tiger beetles are a beautiful iridescent green in colour with yellowish spots on the elytra or wing case. Their length is from 10.5 mm to 14.5mm. Their large eyes and mandibles belie the fact that these beetles are superb predators with a huge appetite.

It is a diurnal insect (daytime insect) with keen eyesight. It preys on other invertebrates, including some spiders, and will often wait on top of burrows so it can surprise the insects when they come out. Running fast, it seizes its prey. Liking open ground, they usually live at the back of sand dunes and the adults can be spotted from April to September. When disturbed they can make fast, buzzing short flights.

In their larval stage, tiger beetles are notable too for their fearsome predatory skills. The larvae dig pits, typically on pathways, in order to create a pitfall trap.