



FAMILY Cantharidae

GENUS *Ancistronycha* / *Rhagonycha*

SPECIES *A. erichsonii* / *R. fulva*

*Ancistronycha erichsonii*

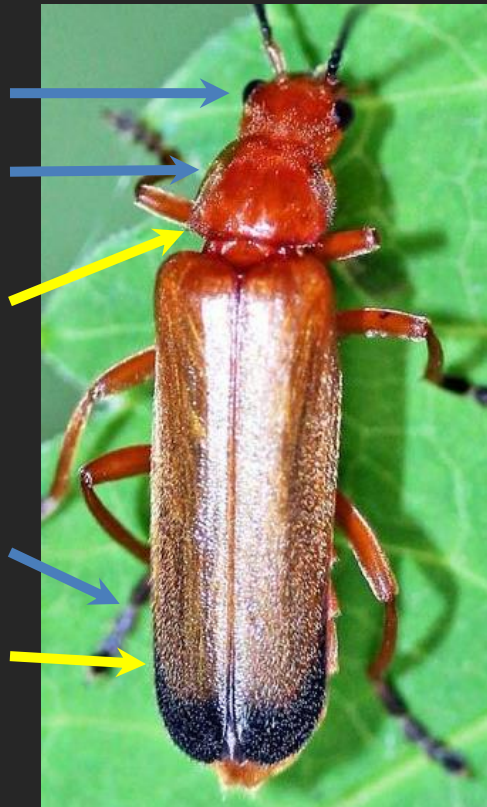
Head with eyes almost as broad as pronotum

Pronotum widest in the middle

Posterior angles of the pronotum rounded. Sometimes hard to see due to hair.

Tarsal segments broad and strong

Black zone at the tips of the elytra elongated significantly along the elytral margin



*Ancistronycha erichsonii*  
Photo © Heribert Janz

*Rhagonycha fulva*

Head with eyes less broad than the pronotum

Pronotum getting wider from the front to the posterior angles

Posterior angles of the pronotum clearly visible, well formed and more or less rectangular

Tarsal segments fine and narrow

Black colored area usually cut almost straight and if elongated along the elytral margin (rarely) only slightly and in a very narrow line directly along the elytral margin



*Rhagonycha fulva*  
Photo © Dr. H. Kliesch

Characteristics after H. Kliesch



In Europe there are at least 4 species of soldier beetles (Cantharidae), which have a yellow-red head, approximately the same color pronotum and yellow elytra with dark area at the posterior part of the elytra.

While the determination by dissection of the animal is almost always possible due to clearly distinct characteristics, the photo determination is not that easy. The situation is most complicated in Italy, where all 4 species occur. In Italy and the Balkans, the species complex *Ancistronycha erichsonii* / *lucens* cannot currently be resolved with photo alone, as there is too little image material available with animals that are identified as *A. lucens*.

In the rest of Europe, it is particularly helpful to look at the shape of the dark area of the elytra when doing photo ID. In normal-colored specimens of *Rhagonycha fulva*, this is more or less cut straight and in *Ancistronycha*, it is extended forward at the outer margin of the elytra<sup>1</sup>. This feature can usually be seen well from a distance to the animal and can decide to do a photograph (*Ancistronycha*) or walk away if it is just *R. fulva*. Another indication help is the location. Beetle crowds on flowers can always be assigned to *R. fulva*. The other species are usually found individually somewhere in the vegetation or in the night flying to light.

Species	Characteristics								Distribution
	At least the first 2 antennal segments yellow, often more than 2	Only the first antennae segment yellow, sometimes also the lower part of the 2nd	Posterior angles of the pronotum clearly visible, well formed and more or less rectangular	Posterior angles not clearly marked and more or less rounded	Pronotum widest at the base	Pronotum widest in the middle	Tarsi strong and broad	Black elytral tip area elongated along the elytral margin <sup>1</sup>	
<i>Cantharis livida bicolorata</i>	x			(x)		x	x	(x)	Italy
<i>Rhagonycha fulva</i>		x	x		x				Europe
<i>Ancistronycha lucens</i>		x		x		x	x	x	Italy / Balkans
<i>Ancistronycha erichsonii</i>		x		x		x	x	x	Europe

<sup>1</sup> In *Ancistronycha* there are quite often specimens in which the blackening of the wing is not limited to the wing tips but includes up to 90% of the elytral area. Such specimens are also common with *R. fulva* in Italy. If this is the case, identification in Italy must take place via the shape of the pronotum. In the rest of Europe this is almost certainly *A. erichsonii*.