

What is the difference between a bumblebee and a honeybee?

If you saw a bee on a flower, would you be able to tell if it was a bumblebee or a honeybee?



Bumblebee



Honeybee

Bumblebees are much fatter and furrier than honeybees.

All UK honeybees look the same and have the same length of tongues but there are 24 different species of bumblebee in the UK. These bumblebees have different lengths of tongue and different coloured stripes – some have white tails, others have red tails and some are blonde/ginger all over.



Bumblebees and honeybees are also different in the ways that they live.

Both live in family groups but a bumblebee nest is much smaller (50-400 bees) than a honeybee hive (50,000-60,000 bees). This means that honeybee hives can produce large amounts of honey which help the queen and her daughters to survive during the winter when there aren't many flowers.

Bumblebees can't do this. They only collect enough nectar to feed themselves so only the bumblebee queen hibernates during the winter. The rest of her nest dies at the end of each summer.

A bumblebee queen will only live for one year, whereas a honeybee queen might live for three-four years.

Bumblebees are wild and build their nests in the countryside and in gardens. Honeybees are generally kept in hives by beekeepers for their honey. Unfortunately some honeybee hives have problems with diseases and mites, which can kill all the honeybees.



Honeybee hive

The main problem facing bumblebees is that there aren't enough flowers in the countryside for them to feed from – they are starving!

Match the facts to the correct bee...

Now that you've read all about the difference between bumblebees and honeybees, test yourself by drawing lines between the bumblebee and the bumblebee facts and the honeybee and the honeybee facts. You might want to use different colours for each bee and then colour in the boxes and the bees.

24 different species in the UK

Disappearing due to diseases and mites

Slim, like a wasp

Only collect enough nectar to feed themselves

Fat and furry

Only a single species in Europe

Live in small nests in the wild

Queen only lives for 1 year

Live in hives with thousands of other bees

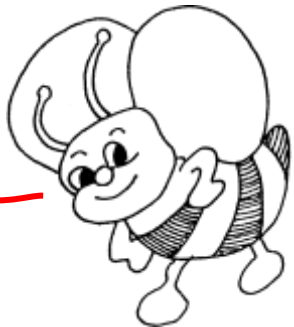

All have the same length of tongue

Make large amounts of honey which humans can eat

Only the queen hibernates

Queen can live for 3-4 years

Disappearing due to a shortage of flowers to feed from

Bumble jumble – can you unscamble the words to read the sentence?

Bumblebees and honeybees are **FDETRIENF** _____ in many ways but both live in **MAIFYL** _____ groups and both need **LOFERSW** _____ to survive.

SHEYBOEEN _____ have short **TNSEGUO** _____. They like open **FOELRSW** _____ so that it is easy for them to reach the **OLENLP** _____ and **AECRNT** _____.



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