

Common UK bumblebees

The UK has 24 species of bumblebee, some common and some rare! These are the eight most common bumblebees you are most likely to see.

Use this poster to have a go at identifying your local bumblebees. Like all insects, their bodies have three main segments: the head, thorax (upper body) and abdomen (lower body). Looking at the tail colour is the best place to start, then the colour patterns on the rest of the body.

For a step-by-step guide to identifying bumblebees, visit bumblebeeconservation.org

The Big 8 poster

Bumblebees listed by colour pattern

-  White-tailed
-  Ginger-tailed
-  Red-tailed

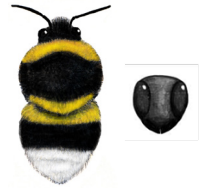
Heath bumblebee (*Bombus jonellus*)

Queen/Worker/Male



Three yellow stripes and a white tail, similar to Garden bumblebees, but smaller with a short tongue and round face. Males have bright yellow faces.

Photo: Bumblebee worker by Nick Owens



Tree bumblebee (*Bombus hypnorum*)

Queen/Worker/Male



Recent immigrant from France. Unique brown, black and white colour pattern. This bumblebee has spread rapidly and is now widespread in England, Wales and Scotland.

Photo: Bumblebee worker



Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*)

Queen Worker



Queens and males usually have buff tails but workers' tails are largely white, usually with a hint of buff at the front margin. Yellow bands slightly darker/dirtier than in the White-tailed.

Photo: Queen bumblebee by Andrea Finch



Common carder bee (*Bombus pascuorum*)

Queen/Worker/Male

The only common brown bumblebee. Some forms have a very dark abdomen, but others are very light and similar to rarer carder bees.

Photo: Bumblebee worker



White-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lucorum*)

Queen Male



Similar to Buff-tailed bumblebee but tail always pure white and bands brighter yellow. Males have yellow faces and often extra yellow bands.

Photo: Queen bumblebee by Andrea Finch



Early bumblebee (*Bombus pratorum*)

Queen Male

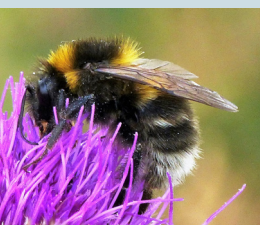
A common small bee with an orangey-red tail. Has one or two yellow bands and males have a yellow face. Rarely seen after July.

Photo: Male bumblebee by Gordon Mackie



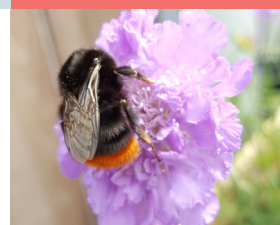
Garden bumblebee (*Bombus hortorum*)

Queen/Worker/Male



A very long-tongued species with a white tail and yellow bands, including one at the rear of the thorax. Has a longer 'horse-like' face.

Photo: Male bumblebee by Andrea Finch



Red-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*)

Queen Male

Females are all black, with a red tail. Males have yellow hair on the face and a yellow band at the front of the thorax.

Photo: Queen bumblebee by Jack Reid

