

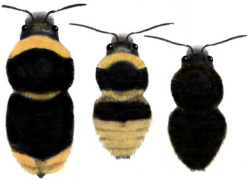
Did you know six of the UK's 24 bumblebees are cuckoo bees, and are named this way because, just like the bird, they have a parasitic lifestyle. But don't be alarmed, they are important pollinators in their own right and are not a major threat to social bumblebee populations. A female cuckoo bee will go into the nest of a social bumblebee, kill the queen, and take it over for herself.

A cuckoo bee does not produce any workers, just new females and males. They also don't collect pollen because the original queen's workers collect it for them! This is why cuckoo bumblebees don't have pollen baskets on their legs.

For more information on different bumblebee species visit bumblebeeconservation.org

Field cuckoo bee • *Bombus campestris*

Southern cuckoo bee • *Bombus vestalis*



Female/Male

Widespread. Attacks mainly Common carder bees. Two male forms occur; light and dark. The wings are strongly dark tinged.



Female/Male

Common in South. Attacks mainly Buff-tailed bumblebees. The tail is white, with large yellow patches on the left and right at the front of the tail.

Forest cuckoo bee • *Bombus sylvestris*

Barbut's cuckoo bee • *Bombus barbutellus*



Female/Male

Widespread. Attacks mainly Early bumblebees. The tail is white, although males have a small patch of red/orange at the tip of the tail.



Female/Male

Widespread. Attacks mainly Garden bumblebees. The tail is white. The wings have a dark, dusky appearance. Some can appear almost black.

Gypsy cuckoo bee • *Bombus bohemicus*

Red-tailed cuckoo bee • *Bombus rupestris*



Female/Male

Widespread. Attacks mainly White-tailed bumblebees. The tails are white with small yellow patches on the sides. Largely restricted to the north and west.



Female/Male

Southern species. Attacks mainly Red-tailed bumblebees. Males have straw coloured banding on thorax and abdomen.