

Bumblebee facts and stats

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Bumblebees have smelly feet! By leaving behind a 'smelly footprint', other bumblebees can tell how recently a flower has been fed from so they know if it's a good food source or not. This helps them save energy by not visiting flowers which have run out of nectar!

A queen bumblebee will live for one year, compared to a queen honeybee which can live three to four years.

Unlike honeybees, bumblebees **don't live in hives**. Some nest underground in old mouse holes, under sheds, and in compost heaps. Others make nests in thick grass or high up in bird boxes, lofts, and trees.

Bumblebees have 4 wings. Their wings can beat up to 240 times per second! That's faster than a Lamborghini.

A bumblebee can **travel up to 6km in a day** in search of flowers. That's like me or you walking the Coast to Coast path there and back, just to nip to the shops!

Bumblebees **have 5 eyes!** They have two large eyes on the front of their heads called 'compound eyes', and three smaller eyes on top of their heads called 'simple eyes'. These help bumblebees to navigate to and from flowers and its nest using sunlight.

Some bumblebee species have **really long tongues!** Varying from 6mm to over 20mm, bumblebees have adapted to specialise feeding from different flower shapes. Long tongued bumblebees, like the Garden bumblebee, prefer to feed from tubular flowers like foxgloves. Short tongued bumblebees, like the Buff-tailed bumblebee, feed on open flowers like bramble.

Bumblebees can see in the ultra-violet range. Flowers have evolved with bees to emit a UV light which guides the bee to the pollen and nectar – like a bumblebee landing strip!

Unlike any other insect, bumblebees are able to vibrate their bodies to dislodge pollen from a flower. This way of gathering pollen is known as **buzz pollination** and has been found to increase the amount and flavour of fruit some plants, like tomatoes, produce.

We've **lost 97% of the UK's wildflower meadows** in the last century. Habitat loss is the main driver of bumblebee declines.

POLLN8



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The Bumblebee Conservation Trust is a registered charity (England & Wales 1115634 / Scotland SC042830).

Correspondence address: Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Beta Centre, Stirling University Innovation Park, Stirling FK9 4NF.

Registered address: International House, 109-111 Fulham Palace Road, London, W6 8JA.