




Buzzing for bees

There are three main types of bee in the UK, can you tell your bees apart?
Here are some handy tips...

	Honey bee	Bumblebee	Solitary bee
			
Body	Slim and small Shiny	Big and round Fuzzy	Variable size Can be fuzzy or shiny
Buzz	Quiet buzzing	Loud buzzing	Quiet buzzing
Number of species in the UK	1	25	240
Preferred flower shape	Any and all flower shapes	Specific flower types depending on their tongue length	Each species has a preferred flower shape
Wild or domesticated	Domesticated	Wild	Wild

Bee identification guide

See if you can identify any nearby bees using our handy guide.
All the bees shown below are female worker bees.



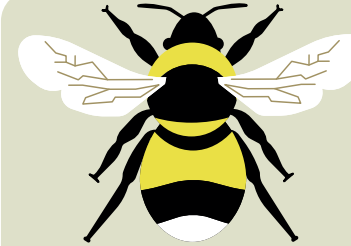
European honey bee
Apis mellifera



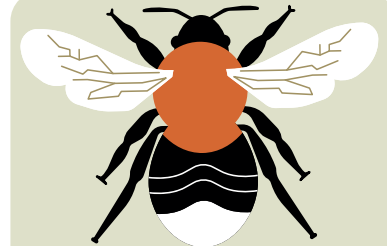
Patchwork leafcutter bee
Megachile centuncularis



Long-horned bee
Eucera longicornis



White-tailed bumblebee
Bombus lucorum



Tree bumblebee
Bombus hypnorum



Garden bumblebee
Bombus hortorum



Common mourning bee
Melecta albifrons



Early bumblebee
Bombus pratorum



Common carder bee
Bombus pascuorum



Wool carder bee
Anthidium manicatum



Red mason bee
Osmia rufa



Red-tailed bumblebee
Bombus lapidarius



Buff-tailed bumblebee
Bombus terrestris

Variety is the bee's knees

The bees take both nectar (a high-sugar energy source) and pollen (a source of protein) from flowers. Collecting both is important for a happy, healthy and strong hive. The queen needs pollen to develop and lay eggs, and the young bumblebees need it to grow. The workers need more nectar to keep up energy levels so they can collect pollen. But what do the flowers get out of this relationship I hear you ask? As the bees visit each flower they will (by accident) drop a little pollen. The plant then uses this dropped pollen to reproduce. This process is called **pollination**.

However, not every bee likes every flower, and vice versa. Each bee species has a different head shape and tongue length meaning they favour certain flowers over others when searching for nectar and pollen. The domesticated honeybee prefers open flowers like those found on hawthorn.

Whereas the garden bumblebee has a long face and prefers long-stemmed flowers like foxgloves.

Having a **variety** of bee-friendly flower shapes in your garden (planted or wild) gives the best chance for **all** species of bees to find the nectar and pollen they need to survive.

Similarly, having a **variety** of different bee species provides the best pollination chances for **all** flowering plants.

Top tip

Leaving patches of grass to grow encourages bees to visit your green space more often.

