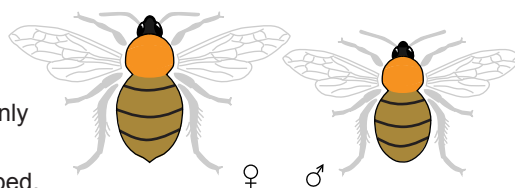


# The BIG 6 most common British BUMBLEBEES

## *Bombus pascuorum* Common Carder Bee

Thorax colour can vary from light- to ginger-brown, often with very pale hairs underneath. Abdomen varies from gingery- to dark-brown. long-tongued; males and workers similar. Nests on the ground. Commonly seen on flowers until as late as November. Found in gardens, farmland, woodland, heathland. Colonies small; generally mild-tempered if disturbed.



## *Bombus lapidarius* Red Tailed Bumblebee

Very common on chalk downland. Also prevalent in gardens. A short-tongued bee. Usually nests under the surface of the ground; colonies often large. Distinguished from the much rarer Red Shank'd Carder Bee by presence of black hairs on hind legs.



## *Bombus pratorum* Early Bumblebee

A small bee. Face longer than it is wide. Females sometimes have no yellow band on the abdomen. Found in gardens, farmland, woodland glades and edges. Nests usually below the ground. Colonies are short-lived, with males appearing as early as April. Rarely seen in late Summer.



## *Bombus terrestris* Buff Tailed Bumblebee

Found in gardens, farmland, woodland, grassland, heathland. Queens are large, commonly seen in early Spring. Nests below ground; large colonies; can be aggressive if disturbed. Workers have large white tail, usually with a hint of buff close to the black band. Males have all-buff tail. Wide-faced. Yellow bands slightly darker than in the White Tailed Bumblebee.



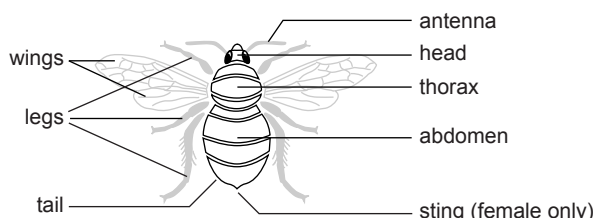
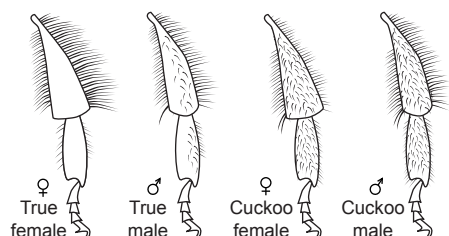
## *Bombus lucorum* White Tailed Bumblebee

A common, short-tongued bee, often nesting under garden sheds. Found in gardens, farmland, woodland, grassland, heathland, uplands, marshes, bogs. Distinguished from the similar Buff Tailed Bumblebee by pure white tails and lemon yellow bands. Face wider than it is long.



## *Bombus hortorum* Garden Bumblebee

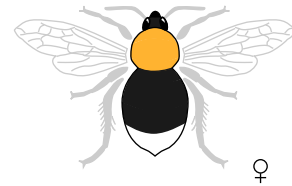
Very long-tongued species preferring flowers like foxgloves. Found in gardens, farmland, woodland, heathland. Nests below ground. Less common in late Summer. Distinguished from smaller Heath Bumblebee by its much-longer face. Males and workers similar.



# Other British BUMBLEBEES

## *Bombus hypnorum* Tree Bumblebee

Very distinctive colouring of brown thorax, black abdomen and white tail.  
A newcomer to Britain, having first been recorded in the New Forest in 2001.  
Now found extensively in gardens in Southern England. Sometimes a cloud of males can be seen dancing in the air outside the entrance to a nesting place.



♀

## *Bombus monticola* Mountain Bumblebee

Nests underground in old small mammal burrows; overground in tree cavities or barns. A moorland species, often found pollinating Bilberry, Cowberry and Cranberry.  
Found in declining numbers in the North and Western Highlands.



♀

## *Bombus soroeensis* Ilfracombe Bumblebee

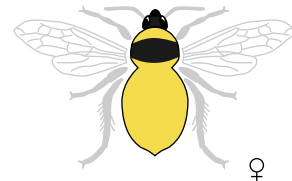
Also known as the Broken Belted Bumblebee as the yellow band across the abdomen is usually broken by a narrow strip of black hair. A small bumblebee; prefers heathlands, uplands, chalky grassland, woody glades and edges. Found throughout Britain; though more frequent in Scotland. Nests underground in old mammal burrows.



♀

## *Bombus distinguendus* Great Yellow Bumblebee

Restricted to coastal sites in Northern and Western Scotland. Emerges in late Spring. Likes open land areas such as meadows, pastures and dikes; also open woods and forest edges. Nests mainly underground, sometimes above ground under tufts of grass, in bird nests and buildings.



♀

## *Bombus magnus* Northern White Tailed Bumblebee

Found in Scottish Highlands and Islands, often on farmland. Very similar to *Bombus lucorum*. Queens and workers have a lemon yellow collar which extends to below the wing base whereas in *Bombus lucorum* the collar ends above the wing base. *Bombus magnus* queens are larger than *Bombus lucorum*. Males of the two species look identical. On Shetland, it is the earliest bumblebee, around from April to September.



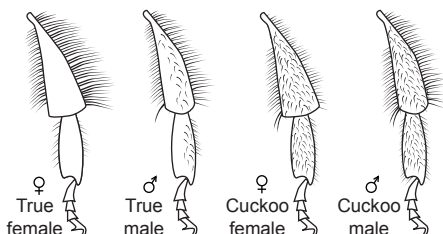
♀

## *Bombus subterraneus* Short Haired Bumblebee

Last recorded in 1988, and may be extinct. There are plans to reintroduce the Short Haired Bumblebee from New Zealand, where a population of British origin thrives. Has very short neat hair. Likes flower-rich heathland and grassland.



♀



True female

True male

Cuckoo female

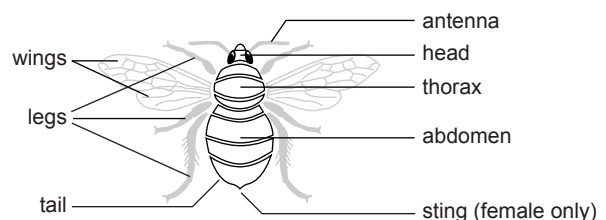
Cuckoo male



Long face



Short face

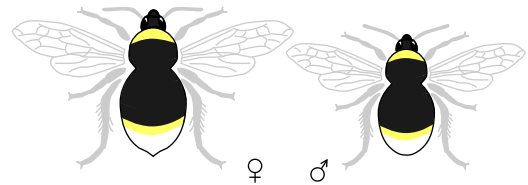


# The 6 Cuckoo BUMBLEBEES of Britain

There are six species of cuckoo bumblebee in Britain. They belong to the same genus as true bumblebees, *Bombus*, but are placed within the subgenus *Psithyrus*. They are parasitic bees, invading the nests of true bumblebees, killing the queen and getting the workers to raise their offspring instead. In southern England, male cuckoo bees can be the most common bumblebees seen in summer. Differences from true bumblebees include: absence of a pollen basket; fewer hairs on the legs; harder, less-hairy bodies; softer 'buzz'. All cuckoo bumblebees have short tongues.

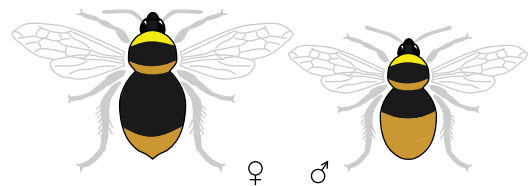
## *Bombus vestalis* Southern Cuckoo Bumblebee

Widespread in the South of England. Found in a variety of habitats including gardens and grasslands. Attacks the nests of *Bombus terrestris* (Buff Tailed Bumblebee). Host nests are typically in old vole or mouse burrows in rough grassland, often beside hedges.



## *Bombus campestris* Field Cuckoo Bumblebee

Widespread in the South of England. Found in meadowland, grassland and hedgerows. Attacks nests of common carder bee. Males are sometimes entirely black, but can be distinguished from *Bombus ruderatus* (Large Garden Bumblebee) by much shorter face.



## *Bombus sylvestris* Forest Cuckoo Bumblebee

Widespread throughout Britain. Found in woodland and gardens. Attacks the nests of *Bombus pratorum* (Early Bumblebee). Males have a distinctive reddish tip to the abdomen.



## *Bombus bohemicus* Gypsy Cuckoo Bumblebee

Widespread. Attacks the nests of *Bombus lucorum* (White Tailed Bumblebee).



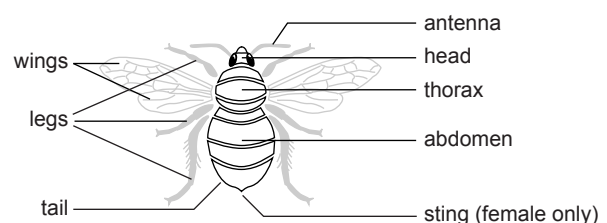
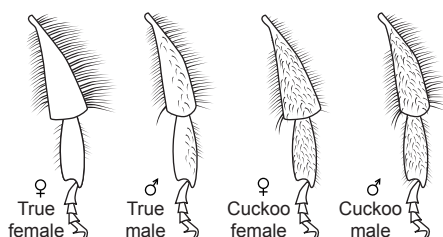
## *Bombus rupestris* Hill Cuckoo Bumblebee

Rare, though possibly on the increase; not seen in Scotland. Attacks the nests of *Bombus lapidarius* (Red Tailed Bumblebee). One of the largest species of British bumblebee. One of its distinguishing features is the blackness of its wings.



## *Bombus barbutellus* Barbut's Cuckoo Bumblebee

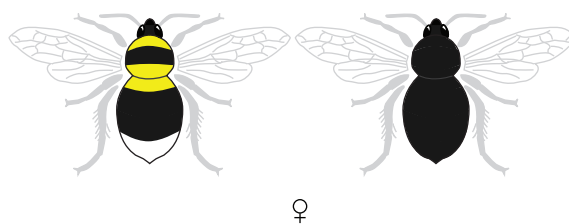
Widespread. Attacks the nests of *Bombus hortorum* (Garden Bumblebee).



# Rarer BUMBLEBEES found in British gardens

## *Bombus ruderatus* Large Garden Bumblebee

Found now and again in South and East England. The queens are among the largest British bees. Colour very variable - some similar to *Bombus hortorum* (Garden Bumblebee), but with a wider yellow band on thorax; some are entirely black. Hair shorter and neater in appearance than Garden Bumblebee. Has a very long tongue and long face.



## *Bombus jonellus* Heath Bumblebee

A small bee. Distinguished from larger *Bombus hortorum* (Garden Bumblebee) by its short face. Short-tongued, prefers shallow flowers such as heather. More frequent in Scotland, found in heathland, mountains, moorland, gardens and grasslands.



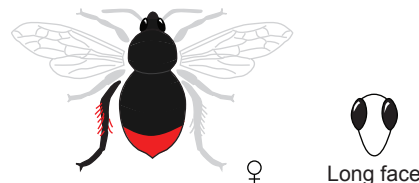
## *Bombus sylvarum* Shrill Carder Bee

Almost unmistakable due to their greenish-yellow hair. Emerges late Spring. Flies very fast. The queens produce a high-pitched buzz; males and workers are quieter. Favours herb-rich grassland; restricted largely to military ranges, unimproved pasture and brownfield sites. Preferred nest sites are on or just below the ground. Likes Dead Nettle, Vetches and other hedgerow plants. One of the smaller bumblebees.



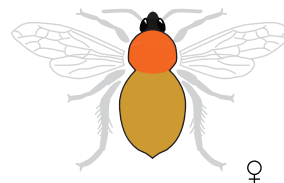
## *Bombus ruderarius* Red Shanked Carder Bee

Sometimes found in gardens and wasteland, but habitat much depleted. Distinguished from the much more common *Bombus lapidarius* (Red Tailed Bumblebee) by presence of red hairs of the pollen basket on its hind legs. Much shorter abdomen than Red Tailed Bumblebee. Long face and tongue.



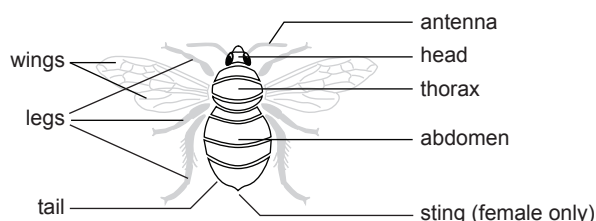
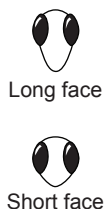
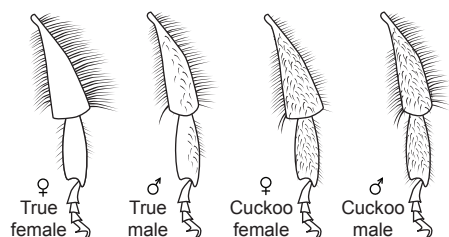
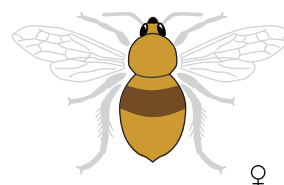
## *Bombus muscorum* Moss Carder Bee

Very rare. Found in moorland, fen and salt marshes. Nests on or just below the surface of the ground, often in long grasses. No black hairs on thorax and abdomen. Now found only on a few Hebridean islands. Has very distinctive orange thorax.



## *Bombus humilis* Brown Banded Carder Bee

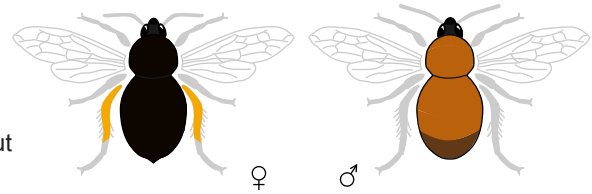
Distinguished from Common Carder Bee by absence of black hairs on abdomen and distinctive brown band on thorax. Found only in Southern England coastal and chalkland areas. Nests on or just below ground. One of the most endangered species of British bumblebee.



# Some SOLITARY BEES found in British gardens

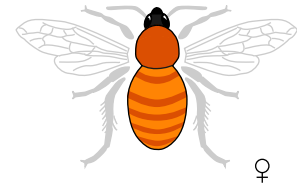
## *Anthophora plumipes* Hairy Footed Flower Bee

One of the earliest bees. In warm weather it is out in numbers by early April. Often flies with its tongue held out below it. The male is brown; the female is all black with yellow/orange hind legs. Both have very hairy legs. *Anthophora plumipes* darts about much faster than bumblebees. Nests in walls and high banks.



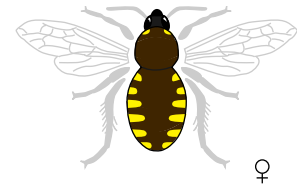
## *Andrena fulva* Tawny Mining Bee

Found throughout Britain. The female has very bright fox-red hairs all over her body. Makes its nest in loose soil, often in lawns, leaving a characteristic cone-shaped mound of soil as it digs out the nest cells underground. The male is smaller, less brightly-coloured and does not play a part in the nest-building process. Tawny Mining Bees typically feed on currant and gooseberry flowers. Like many solitary bees, the Tawny Mining Bee's sting is too weak to penetrate human skin.



## *Anthidium manicatum* Wool Carder Bee

Loves hairy plants such as Lamb's Ear; also smaller-flowered Foxgloves and Purple Toadflax. Aggressively territorial, a male will chase off intruding insects, often wrestling them to the ground and crushing them with three prongs at the tip of his abdomen. The male is one of the largest solitary bees. The female is smaller and less brightly-coloured than the male. Females collect hairs from plants to line their nests with, scraping them off and gathering them into a ball - hence their name.



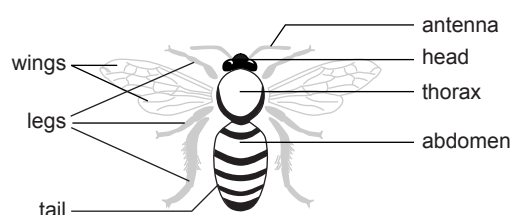
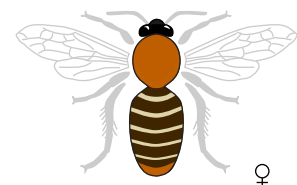
## *Osmia rufa* Red Mason Bee

One of our most common bees, found extensively in England and Wales; not seen in Scotland. Typically, nests in holes and crevices in crumbling masonry, plant stems or old beetle holes. The female uses mud to construct her cells, using two special horns on her face. She may build several nests during her lifetime. Around from early Spring till late June, with the males emerging first.



## *Andrena haemorrhoa* Early Mining Bee

Often found in gardens with lots of bare soil. Appears in gardens in April and May, disappearing by mid-June. The male is much smaller than the female. Nests in gardens, playing fields, beside roads. A very common species, but often goes unnoticed due to its unstriking appearance. Several other ground-nesting *Andrenas* frequent gardens, ranging in size from about 8mm to honey bee size.





# More SOLITARY BEES found in British gardens

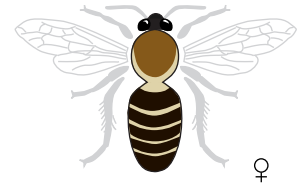
## *Osmia lignaria* Orchard Mason Bee

Native of N. America; found in orchards throughout England and Wales. Slightly smaller than the Honey Bee, and shiny blue in colour; males are smaller than females and have a tuft of light-coloured hairs on their face. Orchard Mason Bees are very good pollinators. Typically nests in existing holes in masonry or wood. The female plugs her nest holes with rough mud plugs.



## *Andrena tibialis*

A mason bee. Slightly smaller than Honey Bees, they appear in Spring. Their favourite flower is the dandelion. Found in a variety of open habitats including heathland, road verges and quarries. Also commonly found in gardens, usually on sandy or stony soil. Nest burrows are dug singly or in small groups in sparsely-vegetated areas.



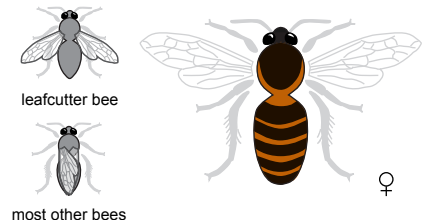
## *Andrena carantonica*

A mining bee. Very hairy bees, and, at 10-14 mm, one of the larger solitary bee species. They like firm sandy soils with no overgrowing plants and are often found near pathways.



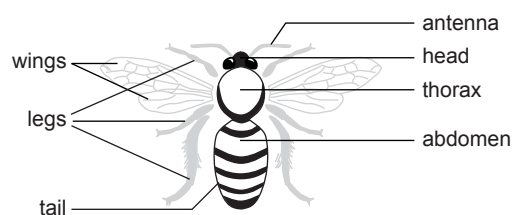
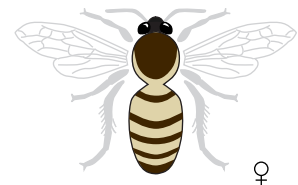
## *Megachile species* Leafcutter Bees

Typically nest in soft, rotted wood or thick-stemmed pithy plants. They get their name from their habit of cutting neat, rounded circles out of plant leaves which they use to construct cylindrical nest cells. Recognisable by the way they hold their wings at rest (see illustration). Leafcutter Bees collect pollen on their abdomens rather than their hind legs.



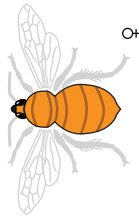
## *Colletes species*

Like Honey Bees in appearance, though usually much smaller and with distinctive white bands on the abdomen. Nest in friable (easily-crumbled) soil. Away from gardens, *Colletes* bees form dense colonies in places such as river banks.



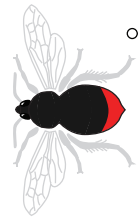
## The Big ♂ British Bumblebees

*Bombus pascuorum* Common Carder Bee



♀

*Bombus lapidarius* Red Tailed Bumblebee



♀

*Bombus pratorum* Early Bumblebee



♀

*Bombus terrestris* Buff Tailed Bumblebee



♀

*Bombus lucorum* White Tailed Bumblebee



♀

*Bombus hortorum* Garden Bumblebee



♀



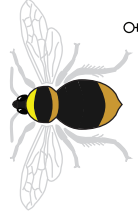
Long face

## The ♂ Most Common Cuckoo Bees

*Bombus vestalis* Southern Cuckoo Bumblebee

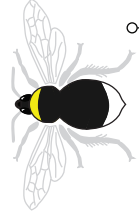


*Bombus campestris* Field Cuckoo Bumblebee



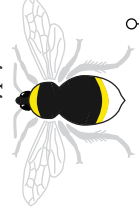
♂

*Bombus sylvestris* Forest Cuckoo Bumblebee



♂

*Bombus bohemicus* Gypsy Cuckoo Bumblebee



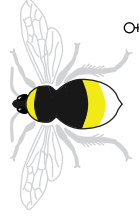
♂

*Bombus rupestris* Hill Cuckoo Bumblebee



♂

*Bombus barbutellus* Barbut's Cuckoo Bumblebee



♂

## ♂ Rarer British Bumblebees

*Bombus rudericus* Large Garden Bumblebee



*Bombus jonellus* Heath Bumblebee

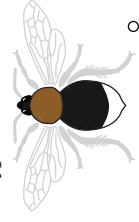


♂



Short face

*Bombus hypnorum* Tree Bumblebee



♂

*Bombus rudericus* Red Shank'd Carder Bee

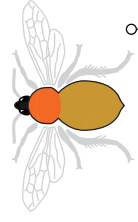


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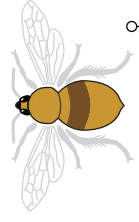
Long face

*Bombus muscorum* Moss Carder Bee



♂

*Bombus humilis* Brown Banded Carder Bee



♂