

## BUMBLE BEES

Genus: *Bombus*



SIZE: 10–23 mm

What differences do you notice among these bumble bees?



Black-tailed Bumble Bee  
*Bombus melanopygus*

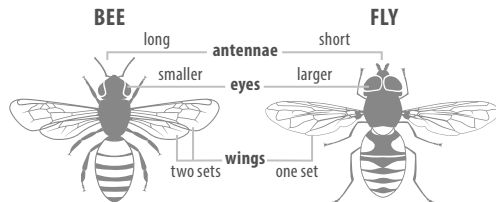
California Bumble Bee  
*Bombus californicus*

What about bee stings?

Most bees are gentle and many don't sting! Social bees, like honey bees, are most likely to sting, but usually only if we get too close to their nests.

## BEE OR FLY?

As protection against predators, some species of flies have evolved to mimic bees. At first glance they may look like real bees, but there are important differences. Use the diagram below to help you tell bees and flies apart.



(All bumble bees shown female)

## Why are bees important?

Bees and other pollinators are essential to a healthy environment. Nearly 85% of all plants on earth require pollinators to reproduce, including two-thirds of the world's crops! Bees have evolved to be the most efficient pollinators, but their numbers are declining.

## 4 WAYS to bring back the pollinators!



### 1 Grow pollinator-friendly flowers

Growing the right flowers, trees and shrubs with overlapping bloom times will support pollinators from spring through fall.



### 2 Provide and protect bee nests

You can leave patches of bare ground and brush piles or install nesting blocks.



### 3 Avoid pesticides harmful to insects

Most insecticides can be especially harmful to bees and other pollinators.



### 4 Spread the word!

Talking to your community will encourage more people to join this important effort.



### For more information:

[www.bringbackthepollinators.org](http://www.bringbackthepollinators.org)  
[www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/ee](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/ee)



POCKET GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING THE

# BEES of PORTLAND



XERCES SOCIETY  
for Invertebrate Conservation

PORTLAND  
PARKS & RECREATION  
Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

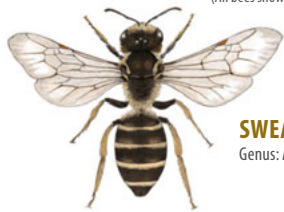


Look for large, round and very hairy bees! They have yellow, black, white, brown, or even orange stripes. Bumble bees are some of the first bees to appear in the spring and among the last to disappear in the fall. Bumble bees buzz pollinate flowers like tomatoes that need to be shaken to release the pollen. They do this by grabbing the flower and vibrating their flight muscles. Bumble bees are important pollinators of many different crops.

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(All bees shown female unless marked with ♂)



### SWEAT BEE

Genus: *Halictus*

Look for dark bees with pale-colored hair bands that make them look striped. Some of these bees are attracted to human sweat, which they drink for the salt content! Some sweat bees may also have a subtle green sheen. They are important pollinators of sunflowers and watermelons.



SIZE: 5–15 mm

### GREEN SWEAT BEE

Genus: *Agapostemon*

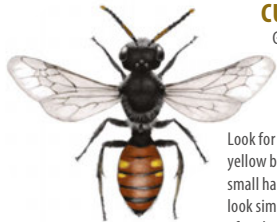


♂

Look for a green head and thorax with black and yellow striped abdomen. These bees visit a wide variety of flowers, but they have a short tongue, making it hard for them to get nectar from deep flowers. Females are fast fliers, and they carry pollen on their legs.



SIZE: 7–15 mm



### CUCKOO BEE

Genus: *Nomada*

Look for bees with black, red, and yellow bodies and markings, and small hairs on their faces; they may look similar to a wasp. Their antennae often look thick compared to other bees. Females don't make their own nests; they lay their eggs in the nests of other bees, and their larvae feed on the pollen collected by the host bees!



SIZE: 3–15 mm

### LEAFCUTTER BEE

Genus: *Megachile*

Look for a smoky color and wide body and head. Females carry pollen on the underside of their abdomens instead of on their legs. These bees will cut pieces of leaves and petals to use as walls in their nests, and females have special large jaws to help with the cutting.



SIZE: 10–20 mm



### EUROPEAN HONEY BEE

*Apis mellifera*

Look for a hairy body, including hair on the eyes, and a black or amber-colored striped body. Honey bees are the only species that make the honey we eat. They live in large colonies, with many worker bees who perform different duties based on age. Younger bees take care of larvae, older bees guard the nest entrance, and the oldest bees forage for food outside the nest.



SIZE: 10–15 mm

### TICKLE BEE

Genus: *Andrena*

Look for black, dull metallic blue, or green bees that are a little hairy, with bands of pale hair on their abdomens. Females collect pollen on the upper part of their hind legs, in their "armpits." These bees regularly nest in lawns, but their stingers are not strong enough to puncture human skin. They are also known as mining bees.



SIZE: 3–15 mm

### MASON BEE

Genus: *Osmia*

Look for round heads and round, wide abdomens, usually without any stripes. Many are metallic green, blue, or purple. These bees are important pollinators of fruit crops and carry pollen on the underside of their abdomens.



SIZE: 5–15 mm

### SMALL CARPENTER BEE

Genus: *Ceratina*

Look for a small, sturdy bee that looks black from far away, but up close will be metallic green or blue. Their abdomens have a unique cylindrical shape. Most species also have yellow or white markings on their faces.



SIZE: 3–15 mm

### LONG-HORNED BEE

Genus: *Melissodes*

Look for very long antennae on the males and hairy back legs on the females. Most active from midsummer–fall, they are important pollinators of sunflowers. Males will often sleep in groups in the middle of the sunflower!



SIZE: 8–18 mm