

# Bumble Bees

## Apiaries & Bees for Communities



### In the Spring

the queen initiates a nest, produces wax, lays eggs, and forages for her brood.



### Her Workers

take care of one another. Store pollen and nectar to feed to baby bees.



### Daughter Queens

mate in the fall with a single drone, seek out a solitary nesting site, and wait for spring.

## Conserving Bumble Bees

Bumble bees are important native pollinators that are a part of a healthy and diverse ecosystem

Bumblebees have a fat furry look, and are large-bodied bees. Native to North America, bumble bees are a social bee that lives in colonies. At its peak in late summer a colony can have anywhere from 15-300 bees. There are about 250 species of bumble bee, which live primarily in temperate regions, and about two dozen species reside in Canada.

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### HABITAT PROTECTION

Habitat loss is the a leading cause for bumble bee decline

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### FORAGE DIVERSITY

Monocultures decrease the volume and season of nectar and pollen in an ecosystem

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### PESTICIDES

Pesticides and herbicides kill and damage bumble bee colonies

## Get Involved

Below is a list of **ACTIONS** you can do to support bumble bee conservation

### HABITAT CREATION

Bumblebees are notoriously picky nesters, with less than a 25% chance of occupancy in artificial nests. Success can depend on a number of factors including species of bees in your area, nest location, nest materials, nearby forage and simple luck. Potential natural nesting areas can be created in your space by allowing a small area in your yard to remain untidy. Enticing cave-like cavities can be created using small piles of rocks, pots, birdhouses, dried grass and various other yard materials.

### FORAGE DIVERSITY

Focus on *perennial native species*. Native plants and bees have evolved together and are therefore perfectly suited for one another. Native plants also require less maintenance because they have adapted to local growing conditions. Pollen and nectar-rich annuals and non-native plants can also be beneficial.

### PESTICIDE AND HERBICIDE USE

When maintaining your yard, look for natural alternatives for pest and weed controls. When purchasing seedlings, look for neonic-free plants as they express pesticide throughout their lifespan. If you are going to spray weeds, be sure to avoid acting when the plant is in flower.



**Aim for at least three different plants for each blooming season.**

### Found Bumble Bee Nests

Bumble bee nests are annual so they tend to remain small and do not cause damage to homes or other structures. If you are lucky enough to have a nest in your yard, the best thing to do is leave it and let the bees finish the season. If the nest is in an undesirable location, the entrance can be closed off in early winter to prevent the site from being used again the following year. ABC Bees offers a **Bumble Bee Rescue Program** in Calgary and area. You can sponsor a nest too. [www.abcbees.ca/our-work/projects/bumble-bee-rescue-program/](http://www.abcbees.ca/our-work/projects/bumble-bee-rescue-program/)

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUMBLE BEES

Identifying bees at a species level can be very difficult, even for experts. However, bumble bees have unique colouring that can make it possible for novice bee-watchers to identify their garden visitors.

Take note of the hair colour and pattern on the thorax and abdomen of the bee. The abdomen of a female bumble bee has six distinct segments (seven for males) covered in black, brown, yellow, orange or white hair. Some species may have a combination of colours on one segment. Compare the pattern to those in our *Little Books on Bees: Bumble Bees* or at the website [www.bumblebeewatch.org](http://www.bumblebeewatch.org).

