



BUMBLE BEES

APPEARANCE

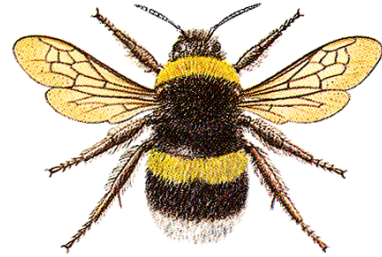
The British Isles are host to 19 species of bumble bee. These vary in size and colour with the most common being the Red Tailed, White Tailed and Buff Tailed bumble bees. Size in each species can vary dramatically from a worker to the large queen. All species are beneficial as pollinators while collecting nectar and pollen from their chosen food plant, some of which are solely pollinated by bumble bees.

LIFE CYCLE

Queens emerge in early spring when a suitable nest chamber is found (an old mouse nest in a sheltered place or an old nest in a bird box). The young queen builds a small pollen chamber where the first eggs are laid and these develop into workers. By mid summer the colony may contain between 50 - 200 workers. Later eggs develop into males and queens and these males and the workers eventually die leaving only queens to hibernate over winter to start a new colony in the following spring.

FEEDING HABITS

Queens emerging in spring depend on early flowering plants such as white dead nettle, flowering currant, shallows, and pussy willow. Tongue length in the different species varies tremendously enabling some species to feed on plants which are inaccessible to any other bees.



SIGNS OF INFESTATION

After a queen has colonised a chosen site continual movement to and from the nest site can be observed.

CONTROL

It is not the policy of Charnwood Borough Council to destroy bumble bees as these insects are truly beneficial and unless provoked continually, present no danger to humans.

For further information contact:

Pest Control Service
Environmental Health Services
Southfields
Southfield Road
Loughborough
Leics LE11 2TX
Tel: 01509 634628
E-mail:
occupational.health @charnwood.gov.uk

