

# 1 Fact Sheet: About Bumblebees

At the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, we are passionate about saving bees. Here is why.

## Save our bees

Bumblebees are among the most loved and familiar of garden insects. The sight and sound of them buzzing from flower to flower is an essential part of summertime, but sadly these fat, furry little creatures are struggling to survive.



At the time of writing, 24 bumblebee species are found in the UK, but unfortunately, in the last 80 years, two UK species have become extinct and others have declined sharply. In our modern world of paved gardens and intensive farming, our bumblebees find themselves hungry and homeless. The reason for this is simple and clearly visible: there are now far fewer flowers to provide bees with the pollen and nectar that they need to survive. But all is not lost – you can take action today to help save these hardworking pollinators. This fact sheet explains how.

## What's so different about the bumblebee?

To most people, bees are instantly recognisable but there are distinct differences between the appearance and lives of bumblebees and honeybees. Bumblebees are larger and hairier than their cousins which makes them perfectly suited for colder climates. Bumblebee nests are small and they do not store large quantities of honey, so their extra furry coat allows them to venture out on cold days to collect pollen and nectar when honeybees stay inside.

## Don't 'bee' confused

Don't confuse bumblebees with wasps. Bumblebees do not swarm and are not aggressive. Only female bumblebees can sting and they will only do so if they feel very threatened. Bumblebees will never interrupt your picnic or steal your sandwiches!



## Buzz pollination

Only bumblebees are capable of buzz pollination. This is when the bee grabs the flower and produces a high-pitched buzz. This releases pollen that would otherwise stay trapped inside. Key ingredients in our diet such as tomatoes are pollinated in this way. Many other common foods such as beans and peas would also be harder to produce and much more expensive without British bumblebees.

### **Did you know that bumblebees have smelly feet?**

Well they do and they're quite useful! After feeding, they leave a scent on the flower which lets other bumblebees know to avoid wasting energy landing – the flower will contain very little nectar or pollen.

### **Things you can do to help**

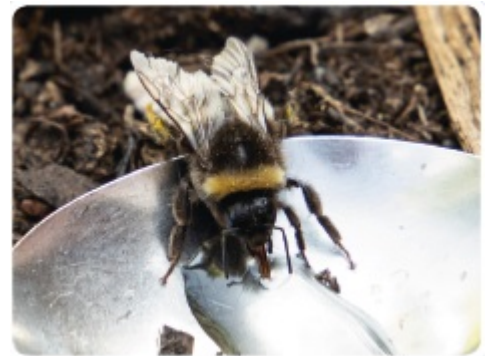
Bumblebees help pollinate plants in more than one million acres of British gardens and the flowers they find can be a lifeline for them. No matter how small your garden, you can help to save the sound of summer by providing lots of bee-friendly flowers throughout the year. By 'bee-friendly' we mean flowers that are rich in pollen and nectar. Many ornamental plants that are commonly found in British gardens, such as pansies and begonias, are of no value to wildlife. These decorative and colourful flowers often produce little pollen or nectar. However, there are hundreds of beautiful flowers that do offer these rewards, including foxgloves, lavender, geraniums, herbs and wild roses that you can add to your garden.

### **Why not try planting these?**



### **Energy drink for bees**

If you find a stranded or sleepy bumblebee, you can help to boost its energy levels with a simple sugar and water mix. Mix equal parts white sugar and warm water then pour into a small container or sponge. Place both the bee and the artificial nectar near to some flowers.



### **Act now**

You can also help by supporting our work to conserve bumblebee habitats and raise public awareness. There are various ways to show your support including volunteering, fundraising and becoming a member of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. For more information on all of the above, including access to our Bee Kind gardening web page, visit: [www.bumblebeeconservation.org](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org)

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1. What is the name of the organisation that produced this fact sheet about bumblebees?

\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

2. Look at the section headed: **Save our bees.**

Complete the table below with **one** piece of evidence from the leaflet to support each statement.

	Evidence
The Bumblebee Conservation Trust is worried about bees.	
The leaflet makes readers feel hopeful for bumblebees.	

2 marks

3. *In our modern world of paved gardens and intensive farming, our bumblebees find themselves hungry and homeless.*

This suggests that...

Tick **one**.

farming has helped bees.

paved gardens are attractive.

bees are good at finding their way.

bees have only started struggling recently.

1 mark

4. Look at the section headed: **What's so different about the bumblebee?**

The text refers to the bumblebees' *cousins*.

Who are their *cousins*?

\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

5. Which section of the leaflet is written to inform readers that they are unlikely to be stung by bumblebees?

Write the name of the section:

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1 mark

6. In what way is *buzz pollination* more useful than other forms of pollination?

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1 mark

7. Look at page 2.

Why is it important for bumblebees to leave a smelly scent on some flowers?

Tick **one**.

so that others avoid it

because it smells better than nectar

so others know it has pollen

because bees give flowers their scent

1 mark

8. Look at the section headed: ***Things you can do to help.***

**Find** and **copy one** word that shows how essential flowers are to bees.

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1 mark

9. Look at page 2.

(a) Tick one box in each row to show whether each of the following flowers is **bee-friendly** or **not bee-friendly**.

	Bee-friendly	Not bee-friendly
lavender		
pansy		
herbs		
wild rose		

1 mark

(b) Explain why the flowers that are not bee-friendly do not attract bees.

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1 mark

10. Look at the section headed: ***Energy drink for bees.***

These instructions suggest that the reader...

Tick **one**.

enjoys preparing food.

has lots of energy.

is willing to handle bees.

is skilled at gardening.

1 mark

11. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Wasps can be aggressive.		
Male bumblebees sometimes sting.		
Bumblebees only go outside when it is warm.		
You need a big garden to help bumblebees.		

2 marks

12. Look at the whole text.

Complete the table below to show what the text says you can do to help bumblebees.

Help for all bumblebees	Help for a weak bumblebee
1. _____ _____	1. _____ _____
2. _____ _____	

2 marks

13. Give **one** example of the use of humour in the fact sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

14. Bumblebees are very important to the human race.

Give **two** ways they are important.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

2 marks