



garden

for bumblebees

and you'll never be short of visitors

Bumblebees are hard-working, loveable creatures, but their populations are experiencing great declines. The good news is that gardens have been acting as a haven for bumblebees for many years. Some species are now more common in urban and suburban gardens than they are in the wider countryside.

The bumblebee lifecycle

The bumblebee lifecycle begins in spring, when the queen emerges from hibernation. She will have spent the winter hibernating on her own in the soil, so her first task is to feed on nectar-rich flowers to rebuild her energy stores. When she has fed, the queen will search for a nest.

Most of the bumblebees you will see in the garden over the summer will be workers, daughters of the queen, collecting pollen to bring back to the nest to feed the developing bumblebee larvae.

In late summer, the nests of most species begin to produce males and new queens. Producing new queens and males takes a lot of energy, and nests can only do this when they reach a large size, with a good store of food. If a nest doesn't produce males or new queens, it has ultimately failed. It is crucial that the nest has a good supply of food from flowers to feed the new queens and males, so try to make sure you have a good variety right up until the autumn.

Its important to have a range of plants available for bumblebees through all stages of their lifecycle, from those early queens to the workers supplying the nest, to the males and new queens at the end of the summer.



What to grow

Spring flowers

- Flowering currant
- Lungwort
- Pussy willow
- Bluebell
- Crocus
- Bugle
- Mahonia
- Peris
- Grape hyacinth
- Hellebore

Early summer flowers

- Allium
- Borage
- Catmint
- Cranesbill
- Poppy
- Sweet pea
- Aquilegia
- Campanula
- Globe thistle
- Thyme

Late summer flowers

- Buddleia
- Cosmos
- Honeysuckle
- Lupin
- Nasturtium
- Verbena
- Cornflower
- Echinacea
- Lavender
- Sedum



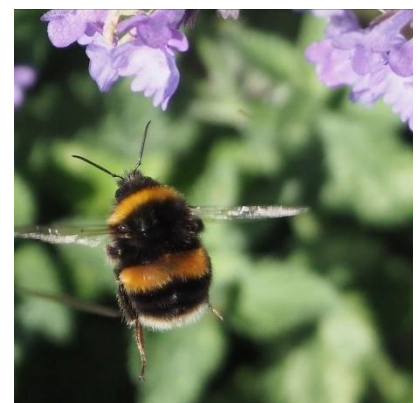
To find out more about gardening for bumblebees and to see how bumblebee friendly your garden is with our Bee kind tool, visit our website.

Bumblebee nests

As well as having the right flowers, it is important to provide nesting opportunities for bumblebees. Most species nest just above or just below ground. Many nests are created in dry, dark cavities such as inside old rodent burrows and under sheds. Of those that nest above ground, some make nests in thick grass, while others make nests in bird boxes, lofts and in trees.

It's important to leave some parts of the garden undisturbed and unmanaged, to encourage wild areas where queens can set up nests. Some species do nest higher up, in compost heaps and even bird boxes.

We recommend that if you find a bumblebee nest, it is best to leave it alone and avoid disturbing it. If you do approach close to it, be sure not to breathe on the nest, as this can make the bees behave defensively and they may sting. Please note that though bumblebees are not generally aggressive, they might get aggravated if you interfere with the nest itself.



To find out more about gardening for bumblebees and what to do if you find a bumblebee nest, visit the Bumblebee Conservation Trust website on www.bumblebeeconservation.org

