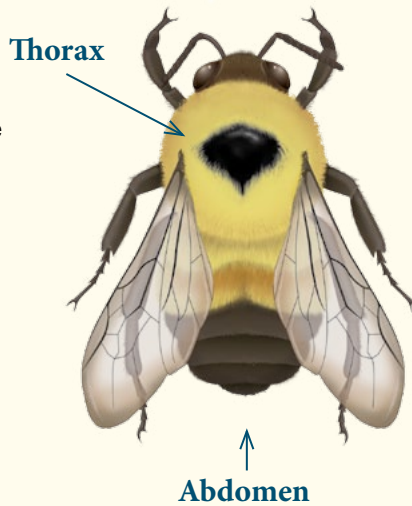


Have You Seen The Rusty-Patched Bumble Bee?

A guide to help distinguish this rare bee from other similar bumble bees in Ontario

Canada's First Endangered Bee:

The Rusty-patched bumble bee was once one of the most common bees within its range in Canada and the US. However, it is estimated to have declined by over 90% since the late 1980s. The last known population in Canada is at Pinery Provincial Park. This species is a habitat generalist, feeding from hundreds of different plant species and occurring in natural and human-modified habitats.



Distinguishing Features:

- In workers and males, the 2nd stripe on the abdomen has a distinct reddish patch surrounded by yellow on all sides.
- Queens have two solid yellow stripes on the abdomen and lack the patch. They can be distinguished from other species by their large body size, round face, and dense, short even hairs.
- Flight time: Queens Apr-May & Sept., workers May-Sept., males Jul.-Oct.

Commonly Confused Bumble Bees



Tri-coloured bumble bee
Bombus ternarius

- Black notch extends down the center of the thorax towards the abdomen
- Abdomen has 4 fully coloured stripes (yellow, orange, orange, yellow)



Red-belted bumble bee
Bombus rufocinctus

- Has variable colour patterns but usually has more than two fully coloured bands on the abdomen
- Black spot on thorax lacks hair and appears shiny



Brown-belted bumble bee
Bombus griseocolis

- Has a partial brown patch in the 2nd abdominal stripe that is not completely surrounded by yellow hairs



Half-black bumble bee
Bombus vagans

- Two full yellow stripes on abdomen
- Diamond shaped spot on thorax
- Queens differentiated by their small body size, shaggy hair and long face

Look for another declining bumble bee

Yellow-banded bumble bee *Bombus terricola*

- Found across most of Canada, especially in eastern provinces
- Mostly black thorax especially below wing bases
- Tip of abdomen has light coloured hairs
- 1st abdominal stripe mostly black, 2nd and 3rd stripes yellow and 4th stripe is completely black
- Flight time April-Aug



In Canada, the Rusty-patched Bumble Bee occurs only in southern Ontario and Quebec and is at the most northmost part of its range there.

Distinguishing Bumble Bees

Pollinators come in a range of colours, shapes, and sizes. There are over 400 species of bees in Ontario. Here are a few pollinators to help you learn to tell them apart from bumble bees.



Bumble bee

- Carry pollen on legs
- Robust, hairy bodies
- Brightly coloured
- Elongated faces
- Large to medium size bees



Large carpenter bee

Xylocopa virginica

- Robust, sparsely haired bodies
- Shiny abdomen
- Round, large head
- Live in wood holes
- Large size bees

What is Pollination?

Why are Pollinators Important?

As pollinators visit flowers to collect pollen or nectar they move pollen from the male to female parts of a plant. This transfer of pollen is known as pollination, and is required for reproduction of over 75% of our flowering plants.

What Can You Do for Pollinators?

- Plant clumps of native or heirloom plants that flower at different times to provide nectar and pollen from spring to fall
- Provide undisturbed nesting habitat for native bees.

No Fear of Stings!

Do not be scared of being stung! Only female bees can sting and many solitary bees are unable to sting. You can observe bees without fear as long as you don't disturb them or their nest. Generally, if you leave them alone, they will leave you alone.



European Honey bee

Apis mellifera

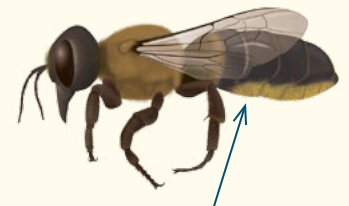
- Slightly hairy bodies
- Dull brownish colouration
- Carry pollen on legs
- Medium size bees



Yellow jacket (wasp)

Vespula germanica

- Bright warning colouration
- Thin waist
- Very sparsely haired
- Wasps generally appear shiny



pollen collecting hairs

Leafcutter bee

Megachile sculpturalis

- Round head with large mandibles
- Dull colouration except pollen-collecting hairs on belly
- Small to large size

To report a sighting of the Rusty-patched bumble bee or for more information please visit:

www.farmsatwork.ca and www.facebook.com/RustyPatchedBumbleBee

