

Name of bee	Main features	Colony / nest size	Tongue length	When they might be seen	Notes
Buff tailed bumblebee Bombus terrestris	Has a buff or white tail and two yellow bands on body. ♂ have black 'facial' hair	Underground in old burrows. Up to 500 bees in a colony.	Short, circa 6 mm.	Females - February to October. ♂s have a shorter flying 'window'	A common bumblebee, the queens are often first bees to be seen in Spring. Active colonies may be found in mild winters.
White tailed bumblebee Bombus lucorum	White tail and two lemon/yellow bands. Males very yellow but not on 'face'.	Underground in burrows; colony size up to two hundred bees.	Short, circa 6 mm	Females - March to October.	Widespread, two generations in a season / year possible.
Garden bumblebee Bombus hortorum	Bright yellow 'collar', yellow band in mid-riff, and a white tail. Have a long 'face'.	Underground with top to one hundred bees	Long, up to 12 mm	Females March to October, ♂s have a shorter flying 'window'	
Red tailed bumblebee Bombus lapidarius	Distinctive 'velvet' like black body with dark orange to crimson tail. Males have facial hair and yellow collar behind head	Underground or at base of brick / stone walls. Colony / nest size is variable - up to 300 bees	Short tongue, 6 mm.	Females March to September, shorter time for males	Found across the U.K., except in the North. Colour tend to fade with age and sun.
Early bumblebee Bombus pratorum	Small and 'fluffy' appearance. Yellow bands. Queens have a yellow band and orange tail. Males have yellow facial hair.	Nests in burrows or in vegetation at soil level, may use old bird nests / cavities in trees. In Southern regions, may be two generations in a year.	Short tongue 6.5 mm	March to August, males have a shorter time window.	Fade as they age, absent from Western and Northern Isles of Scotland.

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Common Carder Bee Bombus pascuorum	Mainly brown / ginger in colour - NO white tail, abdomen ginger with black hairs. Males have ginger facial hair.	Nests / colonies at ground level in vegetation, often use moss to cover / hide colony. Colony size between 60 - 150 bees.	Longish tongue - circa 8 mm	March through to October	Widely distributed in the U K; can establish colonies in a wide range of habitats and may visit many different flowers. May look a bit 'threadbare' as they age.
Tree Bumblebee Bombus hypnorum	Brown to ginger thorax, black abdomen with a white tip to tail. Males have brown facial hair	Can exploit sites not used by other bumblebees - above ground, bird boxes, eaves of roofs etc. Nest size approx 150 bees	Short 6 mm	March to October	A recent arrival from Europe, circa 2001 but now quite common - reached Scotland in 2013.