

Bumble Bee



A **bumblebee** (or **bumble bee**) is any member of the bee genus *Bombus*, in the family Apidae; there are over 250 known species primarily occurring in the Northern Hemisphere.

Bumblebees are social insects that are characterized by black and yellow body hairs, often in bands. However, some species have orange or red on their bodies, or may be entirely black. Another obvious (but not unique) characteristic is the soft nature of the hair (long, branched setae), called pile, that covers their entire body, making them appear and feel fuzzy. They are best distinguished from similarly large, fuzzy bees by the form of the female hind leg, which is modified to form a corbicula; a shiny concave surface that is bare, but surrounded by a fringe of hairs used to transport pollen (in similar bees, the hind leg is completely hairy, and pollen grains are wedged into the hairs for transport).

Like their relatives the honey bees, bumblebees feed on nectar and gather pollen to feed their young.