

## Beneficial Species Profile



Photo credit: [CarolineCCB](#)

**Common Name:** Bumble Bee

**Scientific Name:** *Bombus spp.*

**Order and Family:** Hymenoptera: Apidae

**Size and Appearance:**

	Length (mm)	Appearance
<b>Egg</b>	2.5 – 4mm	Pearly white and curved
<b>Larva/Nymph</b>	Small	White in color within cells in the wax chamber. Grub-like bodies have 13 segments and a pair of spiracles (air holes) in each segment.
<b>Adult</b>	19mm	Robust fuzzy insects with black or yellow hairy abdomen.
<b>Pupa (if applicable)</b>		Pupae are wrapped in silk in the waxen cell

**Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.):** Sucking mouthparts. Maxillae and labium mouthparts form a proboscis for collecting nectar, hind legs are equipped with corbicula (pollen baskets) for harvesting pollen.

**Host/s:** Many different types of flowering plants.

**Description of Benefits (predator, parasitoid, pollinator, etc.):**

Bumble bees are found wherever flowering plants are located and contribute immeasurably as pollinators of wild flowers and crops. Much of the pleasure and profit from natural bumble bee activities are difficult to measure in economic terms. Bumble bees pollinate many wild flower species that birds and small mammals rely on for food.

Like honey bees, bumble bees live in a colony where the adults care for the young (larvae) produced by a single queen. Bumble bee nests are small compared to honey bees, as each nest contains only a few hundred individuals. Also, unlike honey bees, a bumble bee nest is annual and is used only one year and then abandoned. Bumble bees may re-appear in the same area from one year to the next but they do not reuse an old nest. Bumble bee colonies are usually underground in a deserted mouse or bird nest, though they are occasionally found within wall cavities or even in the clothes drier vent.

**References:**

Bumble Bee (2017). *Description of bumble bees*. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.  
<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/iin/bumbleb.html>

Bumble Bees as Pollinators (n.d.). University of Clemson Cooperative Extension.  
<http://www.clemson.edu/extension/beekeepers/fact-sheets-publications/bumble-bee-pollinator.html>

Cranshaw, W. (2004) *Garden Insects of North America: The ultimate Guide to Backyard Bugs*.

Genus *Bombus* – Bumble Bees (n.d.) Iowa State University Department of Entomology.  
<http://bugguide.net/node/view/3077>

The yearly life cycle of the bumblebee colony (n.d.). <http://www.bumblebee.org/lifecycle.htm>