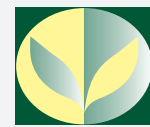
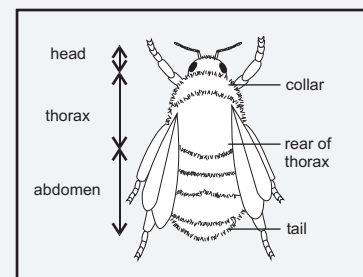


A simple guide to UK BUMBLEBEE COLOUR GROUPS



ROTHAMSTED
RESEARCH

All common (and most rare) bumblebee species in the UK can be placed into one of five groups based on their colour patterns. To allocate a bumblebee to one of these groups, look at its thorax and abdomen. Bumblebee workers are variable in size even within species, but they are smaller than queens which (in most species) they otherwise resemble. These diagrams are approximately twice life size.

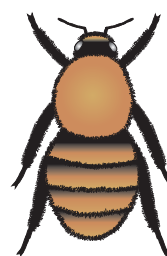


Group I - Browns

Thorax not black. Bee gingery-brown overall. Males and workers similar.

Common species: *Bombus pascuorum*

Workers

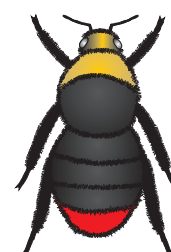
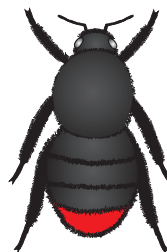


Males shown below if different from workers

Group II Black-bodied red tails

Thorax black, tail red. Males have yellow face and yellow band on thorax.

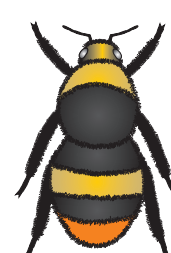
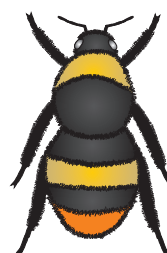
Common species: *Bombus lapidarius*



Group III Banded red tails

Thorax black with yellow collar, may be yellow band on abdomen as well. If yellow face, it's a male. Orange or red tail.

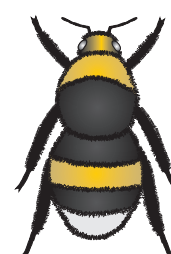
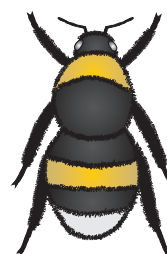
Common species: *Bombus pratorum*



Group IV Two-banded white tails

Thorax black with yellow collar, yellow band on abdomen. White tail. Face wider than it is long. If yellow face, it's a male.

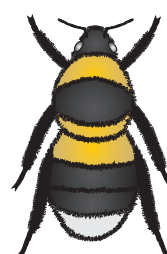
Common species: *Bombus terrestris*
Bombus lucorum



Group V Three-banded white tails

Thorax black with yellow collar, another yellow band at rear of thorax. Yellow band on abdomen, white tail. Face longer than it is wide.

Males and workers similar.
Common species: *Bombus hortorum*



For more detailed identification, see 'Bumblebees' by Oliver Prys-Jones & Sarah Corbet (1991) Richmond Publishing Co. Ltd, P.O. Box 963, Slough, SI2 3RS. ISBN 0 85546 257 4