

Flower-visitors – identification guide

A quick guide to the insects that you may observe visiting the experimental plants for Bees and Beans. All of these sorts of insect play a valuable role in pollination. This is not a comprehensive guide, but much more detail about species identification is beyond the scope of this project.

All photos in this guide were provided under permission by Will George; more of his work can be seen here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/runnerwill/>.

Bumblebees

Chunky, furry bees with dark legs and often with colourful stripes. There are 24 species of bumblebee in the UK, many of which have different patterns of hair colour and markings. The Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BCT) has guides to UK species, with the common bees and their identifying features shown here: <http://bumblebeeconservation.org/about-bees/identification/>



Honeybees

There is one species of honeybee in the UK. They are smaller than bumblebees, with dark stripes and orange / yellow patterns, which are quite variable. They have particularly shiny back legs, often with visible pollen baskets.



Other bees (solitary bees)

There are over 200 species of solitary bee in the UK, so if you have seen a small bee that doesn't look like a bumblebee or a honeybee, it is probably one of these. Some common examples:



Wasps

Social wasps are about the same size as honeybees, but are thinner and less hairy than bees (generally 'smoother' looking). They have bright yellow and black stripes, and yellow legs.



Hoverflies

Many hoverflies mimic bees / wasps, and have a similar sort of patterning. In general, hoverflies have much larger eyes than bees or wasps, taking up most of the head; they also lack the very narrow 'waist', and have very short antenna in comparison.

