

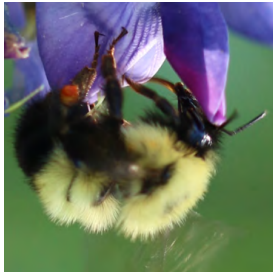
Distinguishing “two-stripe” species

B. vagans
vs. *B. sandersoni*
vs. *B. perplexus*



dorsal thorax
thoracic sides
terga 3 (T3)
shade of yellow

black spot
always yellow
usually black
primary to lemon



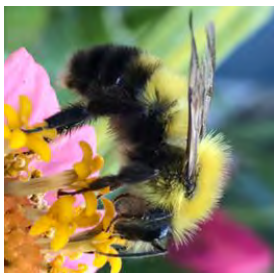
B. vagans

often a black band
usually yellow
always black
brownish



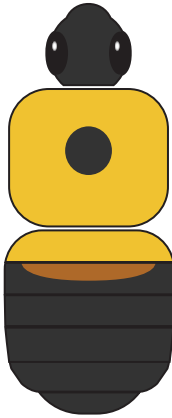
B. sandersoni

mostly yellow
black > yellow
black or yellow
yolky



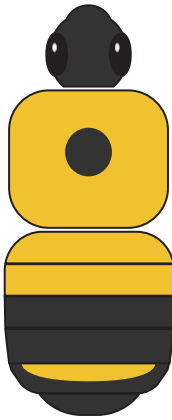
B. perplexus

B. griseocollis brown-belted



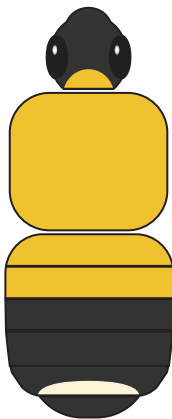
Relatively large body. Short pile. T2 may range in color from yellow to brown.

B. sandersoni Sanderson's



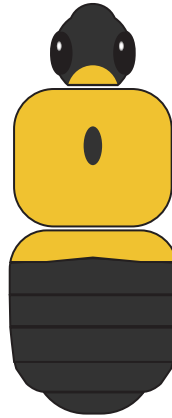
Uncommon. Shaggy. Darker than *B. vagans*. Thin pile on thorax. Possible yellow on T5.

B. perplexus confusing



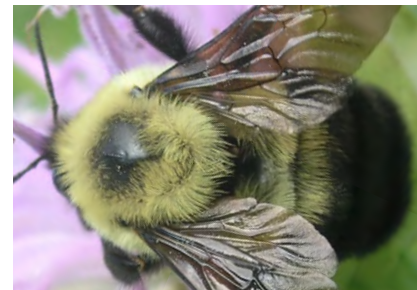
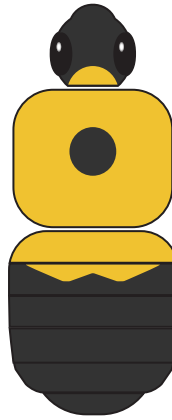
Darker than *B. vagans* with pile the color of egg yolk. Furrier than *B. sandersoni*.

B. impatiens common eastern



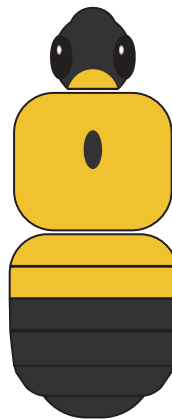
Very common. Neat, short pile with a crisp transition to black. Slight indent to T1.

B. bimaculatus two-spotted



Very common. Pile is often thin on the dorsal thorax. Look for the “B” on T2.

B. vagans half black

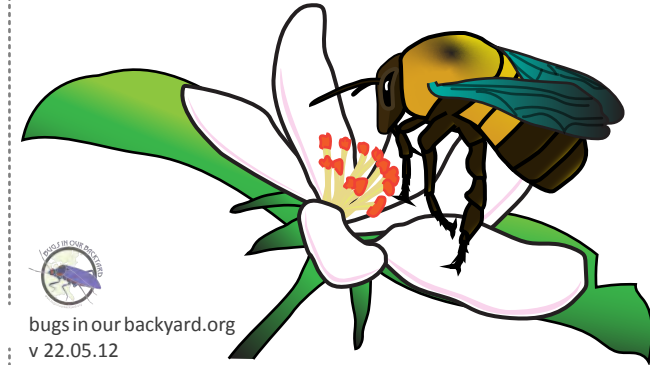


Common near forests. May be mistaken for other “two-stripe” bumble bees.

BUMBLE BEES

A GUIDE TO SPECIES

OF NORTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA



bugsinourbackyard.org
v 22.05.12

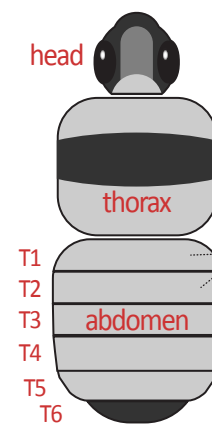
North America is home to 46 species of bumble bees (genus *Bombus*). About half of these can be found east of the Rocky Mountains. Here is a quick guide to distinguishing common species.

We focus on **workers** here. **Queens** tend to look similar but larger. **Males** of most species are roughly similar to females, but furrier, with larger eyes and more yellow coloration, especially on the face. Males have no pollen baskets on the hind legs.

While there is variation within species, most species can be distinguished by color patterns across the body. Their fur is called **pile**. Abdominal segments are called **terga**.

This guide does not cover cuckoo bumblebees, which usurp nests built by queens of other species.

For helpful tips on identification visit, bugsinourbackyard.org
Visit bumblebeewatch.org for authoritative IDs.



Be a part of citizen science!

- Spotting bumble bees is fun and educational! And by reporting your observations you can help scientists monitor the health of bee populations.
- Photographs of bumble bees can be contributed to various long-term projects depending on your location:

bugs in our backyard.org - Observations from New England and maritime Canada

bumble bee watch.org - Expert IDs of bumble bees from across US or Canada

iNaturalist.org - anywhere in the world! Accepts observations of any living thing.

- Always note the date and your location!

Do bumble bees sting?

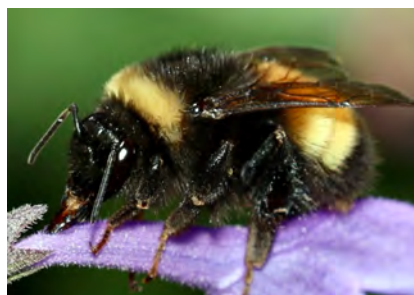
- Female bumble bees can sting, but they are not aggressive unless disturbed
- The most common way people are stung is by disturbing a nest, or by trying to grab a bee bare-handed
- To collect a bumble bee, use an insect net or a small clear container such as a Petri dish
- Most people are not adversely affected by stings from bumble bees or honey bees. Treat the area of the sting with cold and an NSAID. Try not to scratch, as this can break the skin and cause infection.

If you have a known allergy to bee stings

- Call 911 if you have trouble breathing
- Place someone in shock on the floor on their side
- If you have an Epi-Pen, follow the directions for emergency use

B. terricola

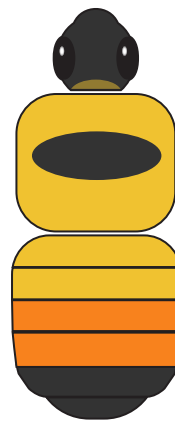
yellow-banded



Once common, now rare. Large with even, bright pile. Fringe of posterior yellow.

B. rufocinctus

red-belted (red form)



More common in northern and coastal areas. Red form found mostly in Canada.

B. ternarius

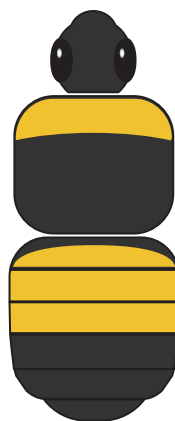
tri-colored



Common on coasts and mountains. Small body. "V" on thorax. Yellow-red-yellow.

B. pensylvanicus

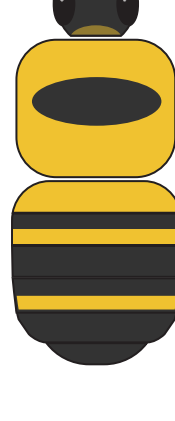
American



More common in southern states. No yellow fringe on posterior abdomen.

B. rufocinctus

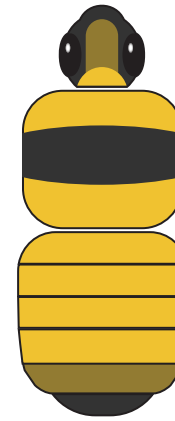
red-belted (black form)



Black form found in Maine. Pile appears thin and pale, almost white on abdomen.

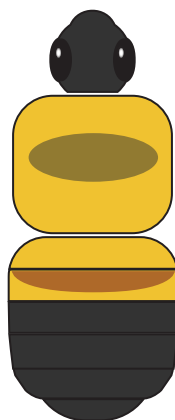
B. borealis

northern amber



Large body with rich golden color. Both sexes have yellow on face. Black sides.

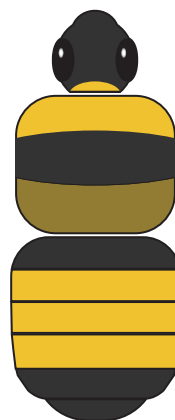
B. affinis **endangered** rusty-patched



Varies in the extent of the red/brown patch. If sighted, report it to state agencies!

B. auricomus

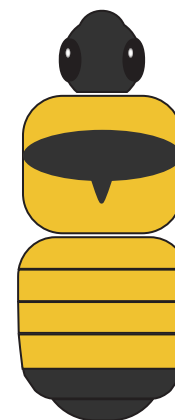
black-and-gold



May be limited to Canada. May or may not have yellow on posterior thorax.

B. fervidus

northern yellow



Less common than *B. borealis*. Brighter yellow. More black on head and tail. Small "V".