



# Honeybee identification guide

A short guide to identifying honeybees, bumblebees, wasps/hornets and hoverflies.



Honeybee

Four wings, large front and small back tucked in when at rest

Long antennae

Small jaws with long tongue

Small oval or kidney-shaped eyes except drone honeybees

Colour – brown and black with orange bands on the abdomen

Smooth body with some hairs on thorax and bands on abdomen.

Back legs – prominent combs of hairs that form a pollen basket hard to see when covered in pollen (absent in drones)

Sting is present in worker bees but absent in drones

Usually seen foraging in large numbers on open flowers



Bumblebee

Four wings, large front and small back tucked in when at rest

Long antennae

Small jaws with long tongue

Small oval or kidney-shaped eyes

Colour – black, white, red, orange or brown in large bands

Very furry all over

Back legs – similar pollen basket, but missing in males and 'cuckoo' species

Sting is present in queens and workers, but not males

Usually seen foraging in small numbers on tubular flowers



Wasp/Hornet

Four wings, large front and small back tucked in when at rest

Long antennae

Large jaws tongue hidden

Small oval or kidney-shaped eyes

Colour – black or brown with yellow or orange bands

Practically hairless

Back legs – has no pollen basket

Sting is present in queens and workers, but not males

Occasionally visit flowers but usually spend their time hunting for insect prey.



Hoverfly

Two wings often held out from the body at rest

Short stubby antennae

No jaws, blob tipped tongue

Large eyes which cover almost the entire head.

Variably coloured as they mimic bees and wasps

Usually hairless but those who mimic bumblebees are furry

Back legs – has no pollen basket

Do not have stings

Can be seen darting from flower to flower, often hovering remaining fairly motionless.