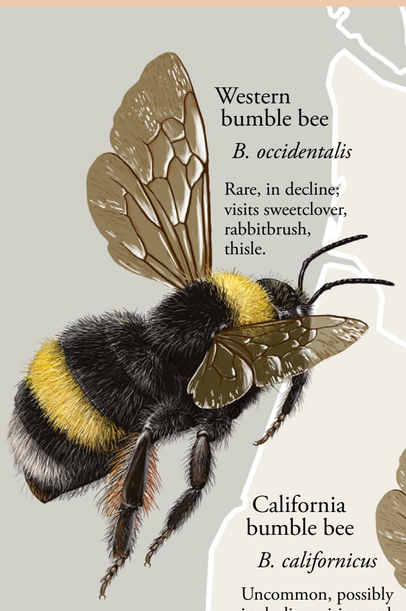
Bumble Bees of the Western United States

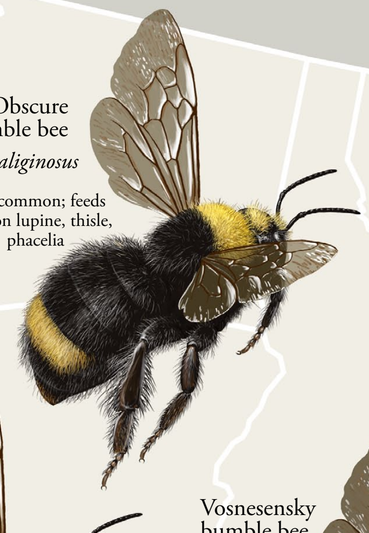
Bumble bees (*Bombus* spp.) are vitally important pollinators of wild and managed flowering plants. In the contiguous United States 30 species of bumble bee are found west of the Rocky Mountains. Compared to the 20,000 described species of bees, bumble bees possess relatively long tongues. However, within the bumble bee genus, tongue length varies across species. The length of a bumble bee's tongue is indicative of the types of flowers they forage on for nectar and pollen. Bumble bees with relatively short tongues may be found foraging on flowers with short corollas, while bumble bees with long tongues may be found on flowers with long corollas. Yet others, like the western bumble bee, are known to rob nectar from flowers by biting holes at the base of the corolla, thereby bypassing the flower's reproductive system.

While bumble bees vary dramatically in body size and color, several co-located species have convergent color banding patterns. These serial mimics can make it difficult to identify a bumble bee to species. Thus, learning to diagnose facial characteristics like cheek length, as well as 'hair' color patterns on the head, thorax, and abdomen are necessary.

To assist you in the identification of western bumble bees, please refer to our published field guide *Bumble Bees of the Western United States*, available at **http://pollinator.org/books/htm** and **http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/animals/bees.shtml**. This guide provides valuable information on the geographic distribution and likelihood of detecting bumble bees throughout the year. Utilizing the taxonomic key, body diagrams, and photographs of bumble bees in the wild will help users determine the bumble bee species in their community. Unfortunately, some bumble bees are in decline, and one species is thought to be extinct. Thus, possessing the ability to identify bumble bees to species in your community will help conservation biologists track the status of bumble bee communities across the United States. Visit **www.pollinator.org** for more information and to see how you can help.



Western bumble bee
B. occidentalis
Rare, in decline; visits sweetclover, rabbitbrush, thisle.



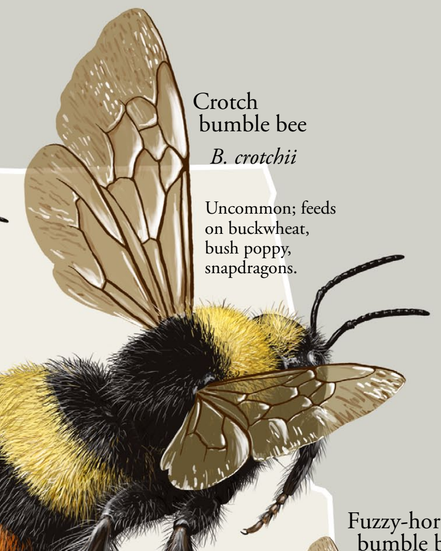
Obscure bumble bee
B. caliginosus
Uncommon; feeds on lupine, thisle, phacelia



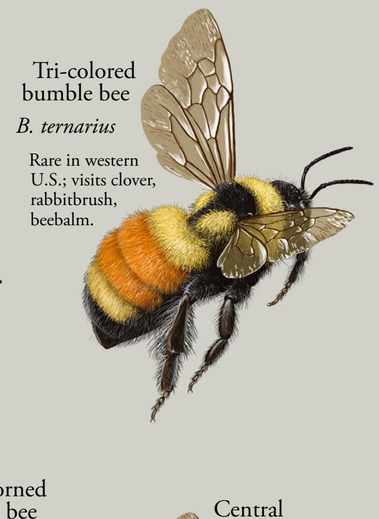
van Dyke bumble bee
B. vandykei
Uncommon; feeds on mountain garland, lamb's ears, blue-eyed Mary.



Black tail bumble bee
B. melanopygus
Common; seen on clover, fireweed, ragwort.



Crotch bumble bee
B. crotchii
Uncommon; feeds on buckwheat, bush poppy, snapdragons.



Tri-colored bumble bee
B. ternarius
Rare in western U.S.; visits clover, rabbitbrush, beebalm.



California bumble bee
B. californicus
Uncommon, possibly in decline; visits vetch, penstemon, beebalm



Vosnesensky bumble bee
B. vosnesenskii
Very common; feeds on thisle, rabbitbrush, phacelia



Indiscriminate bumble bee
B. insularis
Common; feeds on clover, goldenrod, mule-ears.



Fuzzy-horned bumble bee
B. mixtus
Common; seen on blackberry, snowberry, fireweed.



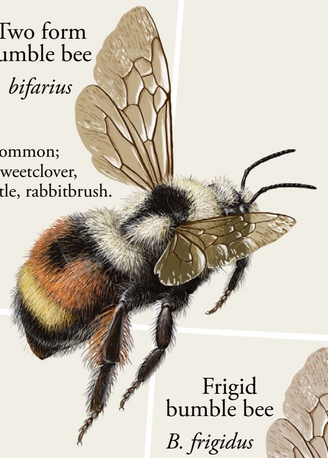
Central bumble bee
B. centralis
Common; visits thisle, onion, snowberry



Suckley cuckoo bumble bee
B. suckleyi
Uncommon; feeds on thisle, rabbitbrush, sunflower.



Fernald cuckoo bumble bee
B. fernaldae
Uncommon; feeds on thisle, cinquefoil, ragwort.



Two form bumble bee
B. bifarius
Very common; visits sweetclover, thistle, rabbitbrush.



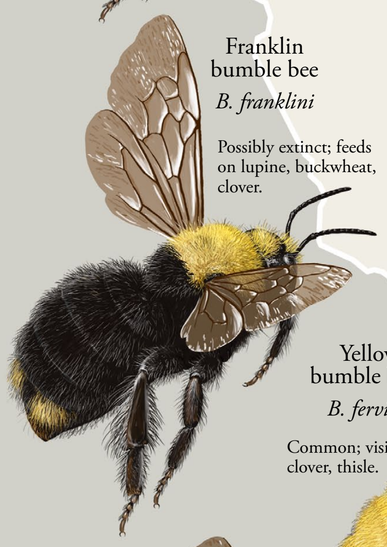
High country bumble bee
B. balteatus
Rare; feeds on fireweed, paintbrush, geranium.



Hunt bumble bee
B. huntii
Common; feeds on sweetclover, black-eyed Susan, thisle.



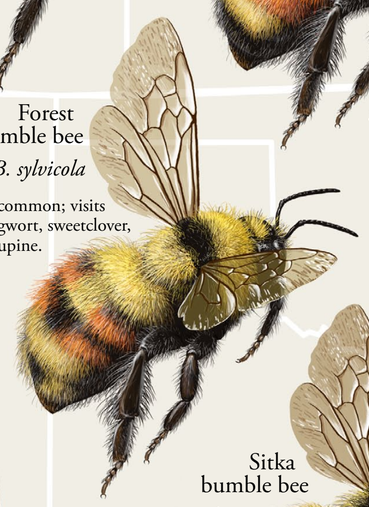
Nevada bumble bee
B. nevadensis
Common; seen on balsamroot, sunflower, currant.



Franklin bumble bee
B. franklini
Possibly extinct; feeds on lupine, buckwheat, clover.

Brown-belted bumble bee
B. griseocollis
Common; feeds on sunflower, clover, alfalfa.

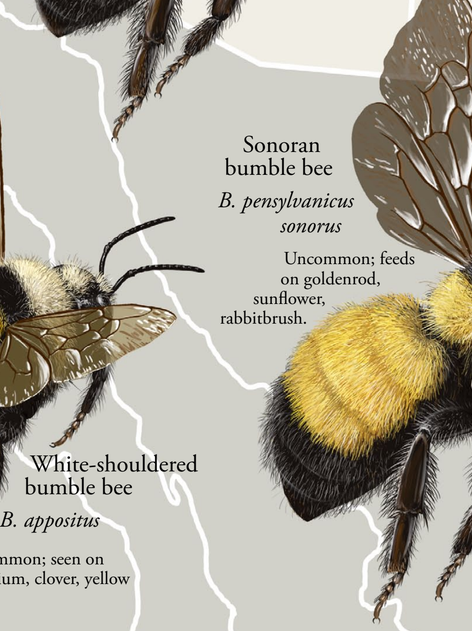
Frigid bumble bee
B. frigidus
Rare; visits snowberry, clover, geranium.



Forest bumble bee
B. sylvicola
Uncommon; visits ragwort, sweetclover, lupine.



Yellow bumble bee
B. fervidus
Common; visits sunflower, clover, thisle.



Sonoran bumble bee
B. pensylvanicus sonorus
Uncommon; feeds on goldenrod, sunflower, rabbitbrush.



Half-black bumble bee
B. vagans
Common; seen on thistle, penstemon, spiraea

Sitka bumble bee
B. sitkensis
Common; feeds on fireweed, lupine, vetch.



Yellow head bumble bee
B. flavifrons
Common; visits clover, sweetpea, fireweed.

Morrison bumble bee
B. morrisoni
Common; found on sweetclover, sunflower, currant.



White-shouldered bumble bee
B. appositus
Common; seen on geranium, clover, yellow toadflax.



Yellow-banded bumble bee
B. terricola
Rare, in decline; blueberry, goldenrod, honeysuckle.

Red-belted bumble bee
B. rufocinctus
Common; feeds on sweetclover, clover, thistle.

Art and Design by Steve Buchanan

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