

Tree Bumblebee

Bombus hypnorum

Insects · Active Mar–Aug



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An easily identified bumblebee with a simple three-part pattern: ginger-brown thorax, black abdomen, white tail. It reached southern England in 2001 and has spread north remarkably fast, reaching Scotland within a decade. Tree bumblebees are now common in Dumfries gardens, and are the bumblebee most likely to take over a bird box.

BEHAVIOUR

Unlike most British bumblebees it nests above ground, in tree holes, roof spaces and especially bird boxes, often evicting or following on from tits. Colonies are conspicuous, with a steady stream of traffic at the entrance, and males gather to hover in a cloud outside a nest waiting for queens — a behaviour people frequently report as a swarm. Colonies finish early, usually by August.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Bees (Apidae)
SIZE	Queens 18–20 mm
STATUS	A natural coloniser, arrived in Britain in 2001

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