GUIDE TO CT BUMBLE BEES: FEMALES

This guide is only for females (12 antennal segments, 6 abdominal segments, most bumble bees, most have pollen baskets, no beards on their mandibles). First determine which yellow highlighted section your bee is in, then go through numbered characters to find a match. See if your bee matches the color patterns shown and the description in the text. Color patterns can vary. More detailed keys are available at discoverlife.org.

Join the search for bumble bees with www.bumblebeewatch.org

Yellow hairs between wings, 1st abdominal band yellow (may have black spot in center of thorax)

1. Black on sides of 2nd ab, yellow or rusty in center
   - Bombus bimaculatus
two-spotted bumble bee
   - Bombus griseocollis
brown-belted bumble bee

2. All other ab segments black
   - Bombus impatiens
common eastern bumble bee
   - Bombus pennsylvanicus
rusty patched bumble bee

3. 2nd ab brownish centrally surrounded by yellow
   - Bombus terricola
American bumble bee

4. 2nd ab entirely yellow and ab 3-6 black
   - Bombus vagans
half-black bumble bee
   - Bombus sandersoni
Sanderson’s bumble bee
   - Bombus perplexus
confusing bumble bee

5. No obvious spot on thorax.
   - Variable color patterns. Often brown on sides of thorax.

Black stripe between wings

1. Yellow on ab 1-4
   - Bombus fervidus
yellow bumble bee

2. Orange/red on ab 2-3
   - Bombus ternarius
tricolored bumble bee

Back half of thorax is predominantly black

1. Yellow on top of head
   - Bombus auricomus
black and gold bumble bee

2. Black on top of head
   - Bombus pensylvanicus
American bumble bee
   - Bombus terricola
yellowbanded bumble bee

Much of abdomen lacking hair, no pollen baskets

- Bombus citrinus
lemon cuckoo bumble bee
- Bombus ashtoni
Ashton’s bumble bee
- Bombus fernalde
Fernalde cuckoo bumble bee

Elaine Evans: University of Minnesota  www.beelab.umn.edu  www.befriendingbumblebees.com