As protection against predators, some species of flies have evolved to mimic bees. At first glance they may look like real bees, but there are important differences. Use the diagram below to help you tell bees and flies apart.

**What differences do you notice among these bumble bees?**

- **Mixed Bumble Bee** *Bombus mixtus*
- **Western Bumble Bee** *Bombus occidentalis*  
  *This one is very rare, but you should still look for it!*
- **Yellow-faced Bumble Bee** *Bombus vosnesenskii*
- **California Bumble Bee** *Bombus californicus*
- **Black-tailed Bumble Bee** *Bombus melanopygus*
- **Western Bumble Bee* *Bombus occidentalis*  
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- **Black-faced Bumble Bee** *Bombus vosnesenskii*
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**BEE OR FLY?**

Look for large, round and very hairy bees! They have yellow, black, white, brown, or even orange stripes. Bumble bees are some of the first bees to appear in the spring and among the last to disappear in the fall. Bumble bees buzz pollinate flowers like tomatoes that need to be shaken to release the pollen. They do this by grabbing the flower and vibrating their flight muscles. Bumble bees are important pollinators of many different crops.

**What about bee stings?**

Most bees are gentle and many don’t sting! Social bees, like honey bees, are most likely to sting, but usually only if we get too close to their nests.

**Why are bees important?**

Bees and other pollinators are essential to a healthy environment. Nearly 85% of all plants on earth require pollinators to reproduce, including two-thirds of the world’s crops! Bees have evolved to be the most efficient pollinators, but their numbers are declining.

**4 WAYS to bring back the pollinators!**

1. **Grow pollinator-friendly flowers**
   - Growing the right flowers, trees and shrubs with overlapping bloom times will support pollinators from spring through fall.

2. **Provide and protect bee nests**
   - You can leave patches of bare ground and brush piles or install nesting blocks.

3. **Avoid pesticides harmful to insects**
   - Most insecticides can be especially harmful to bees and other pollinators.

4. **Spread the word!**
   - Talking to your community will encourage more people to join this important effort.

**For more information:**

- [www.bringbackthepollinators.org](http://www.bringbackthepollinators.org)
- [www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/ee](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/ee)

Broom and illustrations by Matt Strieby, Newleaf Design. Special thanks to Ben Ralls who provided specimen photos as references.
MASON BEE
Genus: Osmia
Look for round heads and round, wide abdomens, usually without any stripes. Many are metallic green, blue, or purple. These bees are important pollinators of fruit crops and carry pollen on the underside of their abdomens.

LONG-HORNED BEE
Genus: Melissodes
Look for very long antennae on the males and hairy back legs on the females. Most active from midsummer–fall, they are important pollinators of sunflowers. Males will often sleep in groups in the middle of the sunflower!

SWEAT BEE
Genus: Halictus
Look for dark bees with pale-colored hair bands that make them look striped. Some of these bees are attracted to human sweat, which they drink for the salt content! Some sweat bees may also have a subtle green sheen. They are important pollinators of sunflowers and watermelons.

GREEN SWEAT BEE
Genus: Agapostemon
Look for dark bees with pale-colored hair bands that make them look striped. Some of these bees are attracted to human sweat, which they drink for the salt content! Some sweat bees may also have a subtle green sheen. They are important pollinators of sunflowers and watermelons.

LEAFCUTTER BEE
Genus: Megachile
Look for a green head and thorax with black and yellow striped abdomen. These bees visit a wide variety of flowers, but they have a short tongue, making it hard for them to get nectar from deep flowers. Females are fast fliers, and they carry pollen on their legs.

CUCKOO BEE
Genus: Nomada
Look for black, red, and yellow bodies and markings, and small hairs on their faces; they may look similar to a wasp. Their antennae often look thick compared to other bees. Females don’t make their own nests; they lay their eggs in the nests of other bees, and their larvae feed on the pollen collected by the host bees!

EUROPEAN HONEY BEE
Apis mellifera
Look for a smoky color and wide body and head. Females carry pollen on the underside of their abdomens instead of on their legs. These bees will cut pieces of leaves and petals to use as walls in their nests, and females have special large jaws to help with the cutting.

TICKLE BEE
Genus: Andrena
Look for long, hairy antennae on the males and hairy back legs on the females. Males are fast fliers, and they carry pollen on their legs.

MASON BEE
Genus: Osmia
Look for round heads and round, wide abdomens, usually without any stripes. Many are metallic green, blue, or purple. These bees are important pollinators of fruit crops and carry pollen on the underside of their abdomens.

SMALL CARPENTER BEE
Genus: Ceratina
Look for a green head and thorax with black and yellow striped abdomen. These bees visit a wide variety of flowers, but they have a short tongue, making it hard for them to get nectar from deep flowers. Females are fast fliers, and they carry pollen on their legs.

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