



## Is it a honeybee or a bumblebee?

There is often confusion about the differences between honeybees and bumblebees and even some of our top media channels will publish pictures of bumblebees when they are discussing/ writing about honeybees and vice versa. This is an attempt by **Lancaster Beekeepers** to clarify the issue using material from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Honeybee	Bumblebee
	
Smaller and slim appearance, like a wasp.	Fat and furry appearance.
Only one species of honeybee in Europe.	24 different species of bumblebee in the UK.
All honeybees have short tongues so they prefer open flowers.	Different species have different lengths of tongue. This means they feed from different shaped flowers.
Honeybees live in hives of up to 50,000 – 60,000 bees.	Bumblebees live in nests with 50-400 bees.
The queen and many of her daughters live in the hive all year.	Only the queen hibernates, in a hole in the ground.

The queen can live for three - four years.	The queen lives for one year, but the other bumblebees only live for a few months.
Most honeybees are looked after by beekeepers, but there are some wild colonies.	They live in the wild, e.g. in gardens and the countryside.
Honeybees make lots of honey, which beekeepers can harvest to eat or sell.	Bumblebees only make small amounts of a honey-like substance to eat themselves.
Honeybees are mainly declining due to diseases and mites, such as the Varroa mite but also because of pesticides and lack of forage due to land management techniques.	Bumblebee populations are declining due to a shortage of flowers to feed from and places to nest in the countryside.
Honeybees die after they have stung as their stinger is barbed and sticks in the skin.	They can sting more than once but only sting if aggravated.
Use a 'waggle dance' to communicate - passing on information about flower locations.	Don't dance but may communicate by passing pollen between worker bees.

If you would like to find out more about honeybees, why not come to Lancaster Beekeepers' introductory one day course on Saturday 14 March "Introduction to Basic Beekeeping" to be held at Truckhaven Conference Centre Carnforth. If you have ever wondered about keeping bees and are curious as to what is involved then this is the course for you! The cost is £60 including lunch, refreshments and course notes.

For further information, contact Huston Clements: [h.clements@laposte.net](mailto:h.clements@laposte.net)



[www.lancaster-beekeepers.org.uk](http://www.lancaster-beekeepers.org.uk)