



Tom Urray



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A Bee or Vot a Bee

There are two major groups of insects that are commonly confused with bees - flies and wasps. @ fact, many flower-visiting flies are actually bee mimics. By mimicking bees in appearance, they are able to gain protection from predators and even act as bee parasites. So how do you tell them all apart

Fly @entification Flies have only two wings, while bees have four. Flies have short, stubby antennae with long hairs or feathery antennae and sucking or sponging mouthparts. Many flies have large eyes that almost meet at the top of their heads.

Wasp @entification Similar to bees, wasps have four wings, chewing mouthparts, a sting, and long antennae. But, while bees are usually very hairy, wasps are usually smooth and almost hairless. Wasps also have a typical, slender wasp waist and rarely have pollen-carrying hairs because most are carnivores and don't eat pollen. Wasps are important predators of many pest insects including cutworms, aphids, and grasshoppers. Additionally, some wasps make paper nests in trees or on buildings.

Wow that you know how to tell the difference between bees, wasps, and flies, try identifying these insects. Answers are at the bottom.

Solitary; nest in dead twigs and stems.

Yellow or white markings on face (females have a vertical bar, males have an inverted T).



Gynette Schimming



M&N Martell



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Uason bees (Ammocrypta spp.)

Family Uegachilidae. robust body; broad, round head and abdomen; usually metallic green or blue; pollen-carrying hairs on underside of abdomen; - mm.

Solitary; nest in natural or man-made holes like beetle tunnels, wood nesting blocks, or reed stems.

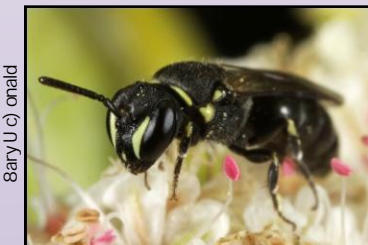
Use mud or chewed-up leaves/petals for nest walls.

Long horned bees (Uelissodes spp.)

Family Apidae. robust; hairy; black body with pale hair bands on abdomen; dense pollen-carrying hairs on hind legs; males have very long antennae; - mm.

Solitary to communal ground nesters.

Some are especially attracted to asters, sunflowers, and daisies.



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Yellow-faced or masked bees (Hylaeus spp.)

Family Colletidae. Slender; almost hairless; black body with yellow or white markings on head, thorax and legs; no pollen-carrying hairs; - mm.

Solitary; nest in twigs, stems, and existing tunnels in wood.

Carry pollen and nectar in a special storage structure of the digestive system called a crop.

Cuckoo bees (Vomada spp.)

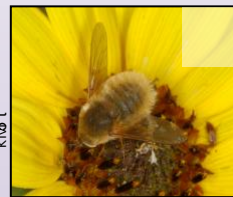
Family Apidae. ♀ asp-like; sparse branched hairs; red or black body with yellow or white markings; relatively thick antennae; no pollen-carrying hairs; - mm.

Females visit flowers for nectar, but do not collect pollen for their young.

Females are kleptoparasites - they lay eggs in nests of other bees thereby stealing the nests and food.



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