

* *Rusty Patched Bumble Bee vs. Honey Bee* *



Photo by Susan Carpenter



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RUSTY PATCHED BUMBLE BEE

Produce a small amount of honey-like substance that they eat themselves

Fat and furry appearance

Native to eastern **North America**

Live in **underground** nests of 50-400 bees

Everybody but the queen dies before the start of winter. The queen hibernates underground.

Bumble bees are able to buzz pollinate. **Buzz pollination** is when bees contract their muscles to create strong vibrations that cause the flower to release the pollen that is packed tightly in the flower anthers. Plants that **require buzz pollination** are: tomatoes, eggplants, kiwis, potatoes and cranberries.

Queen lifespan: **1 year**

Worker bee lifespan: **A few months**

Male function: Their goal is to **mate with the queen** (most do not get the chance). Males can mate with other queens and workers.

Bumble bees **rarely sting**, unless touched or their nest is disturbed. Their **nests are short-lived**, surviving only until late summer to mid-autumn.

HONEY BEE

Produce large quantities of honey, which can be harvested for human consumption

Smaller and slim appearance

Native to **Europe**

Live in **hives (above ground)** of 20,000-60,000 bees

The queen and many of her daughters live in the hive all year round.

Some crops, including blueberries and cherries, are **90-percent dependent** on honey bee pollination; one crop, almonds, **depends entirely** on the honey bee for pollination at bloom time.

Queen lifespan: **3-4 years**

Worker bee lifespan (active season): **5-6 weeks**

Worker bee lifespan (overwintering): **4-6 months**

Male (drone) function: **Mate with the queen**, which causes the drone's death. Drones do not work. Surviving drones are expelled from the hive before the start of winter. **Expelled** drones will starve in the winter.

Tend to be **mild-mannered** and only sting when they or their colony is threatened. Their **hives can last for years**. Most of their hives are managed by beekeepers, but some wild hives can be found.