

Early Bumblebee

Bombus pratorum

Insects · Active Mar-Jul



Photo by Ivar Leidus, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

A small bumblebee with a yellow band at the front of the thorax, usually a yellow band on the abdomen, and an orange-red tail. Males have a yellow face and are noticeably fluffy. Early bumblebees are common in gardens, woodland edge and hedgerow around Dumfries, and their small size and short season make them easy to overlook.

BEHAVIOUR

True to the name, this species starts and finishes early: queens emerge in March, colonies are small — often under a hundred workers — and the whole cycle is usually complete by July, when other bumblebees are at their peak. There is sometimes a second generation in a good year. It nests in cavities above or below ground, including bird boxes and compost heaps.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Bees (Apidae)
SIZE	Queens 15–17 mm · one of our smaller bumblebees
STATUS	Native; common and widespread

Photo by Ivar Leidus, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Natureville