

Red-tailed Bumblebee

Bombus lapidarius

Insects · Active Mar-Oct



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A striking bumblebee: queens and workers are velvety black with a bright orange-red tail and no bands at all. Males are quite different, with yellow bands on the thorax and face as well as the red tail, and are regularly reported as something else. Red-tails favour open, sunny, flowery places — verges, brownfield ground, unimproved grassland — around Dumfries.

BEHAVIOUR

Red-tailed bumblebees are short-tongued and work open, accessible flowers such as knapweed, thistle, bramble and clover. Nests are underground, often beneath stones, walls and rubble — the scientific name *lapidarius* means 'of stones'. Queens are large and conspicuous in spring, patrolling low over bare ground looking for a nest site.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Bees (Apidae)
SIZE	Queens 20–22 mm
STATUS	Native; common on open flowery ground

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