

Bees



There are over 20,000 species of bees in the world. However, in this country the most common species are the honeybee, the bumblebee and the masonry bee.

Honeybees are important insects that benefit the environment. They live in colonies, either in the wild in nests or in hives kept by beekeepers. They are not normally considered to be pests.

Honeybee

Each colony consists of a queen, a small number of males (or drones) and a large number of worker bees. The workers look after and feed the queen, who produces up to 2000 eggs a day. From time to time the workers build a few special, large groups in the colony in which they rear new queens.



As honeybees only have one queen in each colony, the old queen usually leaves the colony when a new queen emerges. A number of the colony's workers go with her, forming what is known as a swarm. They then form a new colony.

If a beekeeper does not collect the swarm, the bees will remain wild and may set up a new colony in hollow trees, or sometimes cavity walls.

Honeybees are remarkably peaceful insects and unlike wasps, they will only sting people if they are seriously provoked.



Bumblebees

Bumblebees are close relatives of the honeybee but are larger, hairy insects, normally black and yellow in colour. Unlike the honeybee, where the colony survives the winter, a bumblebee colony only lasts for one season. Only a few young mated queens survive and spend the winter in hibernation.

There are about 10 species of bumblebee in northern Europe, and the majority of these build their nests in the ground, between stones in farm walls or in empty nest boxes.

Bumblebees are beneficial to man, as they pollinate many fruit trees and other plants. They, like the honeybee, are very docile and will only sting when seriously provoked.



Masonry bees

Masonry bees are normally smaller than honeybees, and do not live in colonies. Contrary to their names, they do not cause structural damage, and do not sting. They start to appear in March and disappear by mid-June. (They spend the rest of the year as eggs, larvae, or pupae).



Rochford District Council

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Phone: **01702 318111**

Email: **customerservices@rochford.gov.uk**

Website: **www.rochford.gov.uk/pest control**

Advice and information

Although we do not provide a service to control colonies of bees, we do have officers who can give you advice, and maybe able to give you details of beekeepers that collect swarms. If your call relates to honeybees, phone **01702 318111**.

You can also get advice from the British Bee Keepers Association at **www.bbka.org.uk**
Phone **0871 811 2337** or **0871 811 2282**

If you would like this information in large print, Braille or another language phone us on

01702 318111