

Pest Control Guidance Document - Bees

Introduction

There are over 250 kinds of bees in Britain. The honey bee and bumble bees live in colonies and belong to a group known as the social bees, but the majorities of other species do not live in colonies and are solitary bees.

Solitary bees

Solitary bees are to be found in many gardens during spring and summer but go largely unobserved. Common species include the masonry, mining and leaf cutter bees.

Masonry bees

The female is often seen constructing a tiny tunnel in a wall normally in the pointing between the bricks where she lays a single egg.



Action

There is no treatment; the only answer is to repoint the area after the new adult bee emerges. Solitary bees do not swarm and are unlikely to sting unless they are handled or their nest disturbed.

Honey bees

They are brown and yellow in colour and smaller than the bumble bee. They are the species kept by man in hives from which honey and wax are made. The numbers can vary in a colony from 40,000 to 50,000 at the height of the season (July). Those born at the end of summer however survive the winter living on stored honey.

Bumble bee

Larger and rounder than honey bees and often produce a deep buzzing sound. Bumble bees build small round grass nests, often under buildings or in holes in the ground. They do not swarm nor do they sting unless the nest is disturbed. If at all possible, bumble bee nests should be left undisturbed for at the end of the summer all bees except the queen will die and the nest abandoned.



Swarms

If a hive is overcrowded, bees may emerge in a dense cloud and headed by the queen, settle on a branch or tree. If left, scout bees will eventually find a sheltered situation and start a new colony.

For further information and guidance on dealing with Bumble bees visit the [Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#)

For more information on swarms contact the [British Bee Keepers Association](#)

Wigan Council do not provide treatment for Bees, unless there is a danger to the general public