

Bumblebees vs. Honeybees

What's the Difference?



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Bumblebee



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Honeybee

Bumblebees and honeybees are both bees. Both are yellow and black. Both collect nectar. Both collect pollen. Both pollinate flowers. Both can sting. But this is where the similarities end.

Honeybees

Honeybees often make their hives in hollow trees. Their hives are big. They are made out of neat honeycombs. Thousands of bees live in them. The bees can live through the winter. They stay in their hives all winter. They bunch together to keep warm.

Honeybees work between 3–12 hours per day. They make a lot of honey. They make more than they can use. They make enough for humans to eat.

Honeybees can sting. But they only sting when under attack. A honeybee can only sting once. It dies afterward.

Bumblebees vs. Honeybees

Bumblebees

Bumblebees look like big, fuzzy honeybees. They make their hives in the homes of other animals. The queen searches for underground burrows made by small animals. She also looks for birdhouses. Queens are fierce. They will chase animals from their homes.

Only queen bumblebees live through the winter. The other bumblebees die. The queen hibernates. She wakes up in the spring. Then she looks for a good place to make a hive.

Once she finds a good place, the queen gets very busy. She builds special pots out of wax. She lays a few eggs in each one. She lays about 50 workers at the start of the season. She seals her eggs inside the pots. Then she collects honey. She puts the honey in the honey pots. This is what her workers will eat once they hatch.



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Bumblebee hive



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Honeybee hive

Bumblebees do not make hives from honeycomb. They make little pots of wax. The pots of wax are underground. Bumblebee hives are small. Each hive has about 500 bees at most.

Bumblebees vs. Honeybees

Bumblebees are the busiest bees. They work 18 hours per day. Greenhouse farmers prefer bumblebees for this reason. Greenhouse farmers grow fruits or vegetables inside a greenhouse. Tomato farmers prefer bumblebees, too. Tomato flowers have pollen that is very hard to remove. Bumblebees know just how to buzz to get the pollen to fall off. They pollinate more tomato plants. This means that more tomatoes will grow.

Bumblebees can sting more than once. They can sting again and again. They don't usually sting unless they are under attack.