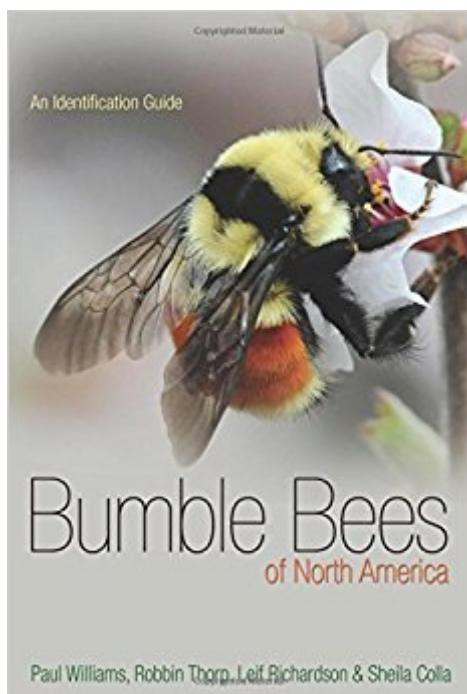


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# Bumble Bees Of North America: An Identification Guide (Princeton Field Guides)



## Synopsis

More than ever before, there is widespread interest in studying bumble bees and the critical role they play in our ecosystems. *Bumble Bees of North America* is the first comprehensive guide to North American bumble bees to be published in more than a century. Richly illustrated with color photographs, diagrams, range maps, and graphs of seasonal activity patterns, this guide allows amateur and professional naturalists to identify all 46 bumble bee species found north of Mexico and to understand their ecology and changing geographic distributions. The book draws on the latest molecular research, shows the enormous color variation within species, and guides readers through the many confusing convergences between species. It draws on a large repository of data from museum collections and presents state-of-the-art results on evolutionary relationships, distributions, and ecological roles. Illustrated keys allow identification of color morphs and social castes. A landmark publication, *Bumble Bees of North America* sets the standard for guides and the study of these important insects. The best guide yet to the 46 recognized bumble bee species in North America north of Mexico Up-to-date taxonomy includes previously unpublished results Detailed distribution maps Extensive keys identify the many color patterns of species

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As bee populations plummet and environmental concerns continue to make the news, there is widespread interest in bees. This attractively priced guide helps users identify the 46 species found north of Mexico and offers insight into their ecology and habitats. Detailed distribution maps,

full-color illustrations and photographs, and identification keys accompany brief narrative information and a variety of tables. This guide will be useful in public and academic libraries where there is an interest in bees or the environment. --Rebecca Vnuk

Winner of a 2015 Outstanding Reference Sources Award, Reference and User Services Association, American Library Association" A very helpful guide for any one interested in bumble bees."--Amanda Williams, buzzaboutbees.net" As bee populations plummet and environmental concerns continue to make the news, there is widespread interest in bees. This attractively priced guide helps users identify the 46 species found north of Mexico and offers insight into their ecology and habitats. . . . This guide will be useful in public and academic libraries where there is an interest in bees or the environment."--Rebecca Vnuk, Booklist" Identif[ies] the 46 species of bumblebee that are found in North America (Mexico is not included), far more than previous guides. The introduction presents clear information on these bees generally, their distribution, colony cycle, and interactions with plants. . . . An attractive, worthwhile purchase."--Margaret Heilbrun, Library Journal" Because of their importance as a pollinator, their ubiquity (in various species, of course) across the continent, and simply because the lives and behaviors bumble bees are so fascinating, Bumble Bees of North America should be considered as a must-read by all amateur naturalists. Professionals--be they entomologists, ecologists, general biologists, and most especially teachers of life science subjects at all levels--would also do well to add it to their reading lists for both its superb introduction to the genus as well as its value as a reference guide."--John Riutta, Well-read Naturalist" The timely arrival of Bumble Bees of North America on bookstore shelves is as welcome as its namesake insects are in gardens. . . . Given that the last comprehensive guide to North American bumble bees was published in 1913, Williams, Thorps, Richardson, and Colla's Bumble Bees of North America offers a much-needed review of the status and identification of the 46 bumble bee species north of Mexico. . . . [A] much-needed milestone in the ability of scientists and citizens alike to sort bee species found afield and at home. With bees on the decline, the ability to identify and inventory the buzz in our backyards may prove critical in future conservation efforts."--Matthew Bettelheim, (bio)accumulation" [T]his book [is] a useful addition to any gardener or wildlife watcher's library. The really nice thing about this guide is the number and quality of the photographs they provide: I really need to get a copy of this book to help me identify the bumble bees I catch in my surveys."--AC, Wildlife Activist" Accessible to both the layman and serious apologist. Carefully organized, it begins with an introduction that is a must-read before moving on to the comprehensive bumble bee ID guide. . . . I commend this book to all lovers of native plants."--Harold Smith, Blazing Star,

publication of The North American Native Plant Society" This reasonably priced, attractive volume with excellent photographs and color plates will be valuable to professionals as well as anyone interested in identifying or learning more about bumblebees." --Choice "I encourage all melittologists to obtain a copy for ready use, as well as anyone interested in the conservation, ecology, biology, natural history, or simple appreciation of bumble bees." --Michael S. Engel, Entomologist's Monthly "[A] most desirable book. Each species is beautifully photographed and then described in detail, with maps and identification markings as well as comprehensive text to inform you about the particular bee in question." --Mary Montaut, An Beachaire "This is a very well-written book which presents and updates information from a wide range of sources in a very readable and clear way." --Mike Edwards, Journal of the British Entomology and Natural History Society "Bumble Bees of North America has not only provided casual observers and professionals with a comprehensive treatment of North American bumblebees, it has delivered utility while preserving aesthetics." --Samuel O'Dell, Prairie Naturalist "This book is primarily an identification manual that also describes the distribution of the species. It is the perfect size for a field guide but it may be even more helpful when you are using microscopic characteristics for identification. The Bumble Bees of North America is also an invaluable reference for those of us who want to learn about and identify which bumble bees are our neighbours." --Tracy Ferreira, Bulletin of the Entomological Society of Canada

There is a great lack of good bee field guides, and this is a wonderful move toward fixing that. The book has great information on the biology of bees, crisp high-res photos (nothing worse than big, fuzzy pictures in a field guide), diagrams of the various possible color patterns, beautiful range maps, really interesting graphs of the queen, worker, male abundances for each species, and good keys for the species if you are technically adept and have a scope. This guide is doubtless more useful to the scientist or graduate student, but is useful for anyone interested in identifying bumble bees to species. I also have the free UDSA books on bumble bees that Williams et al did, but in my opinion this one is better and worth buying if you are using this professionally or as an amateur entomologist.

Although not a trained biologist, I am a lifetime member of The Prairie Enthusiasts, and my family owns virgin tallgrass prairie on the Minnesota River bottoms. I am an avid gardener as well. This book will be a valuable reference, and I might even be able to identify bees as something more than "odd." It is easy for a non-technical person like myself to learn how to live in harmony with these

wonderful creatures. The book is structured in a useful manner, which makes it user-friendly. Highly recommend for anyone with an inquiring mind who wishes to learn more about our fussy winged friends.

I'm stingy with five stars and their reward probably reflects my interest in the subject matter as much as the content of the book. As a member of the Master Gardening program I'm particularly interested in attracting bees and butterflies to the garden. However, I must admit that a bumble bee was a bumble bee until I encountered a couple of large carpenter bees burrowing holes into my new cedar greenhouse. Like most identification guides, this is not intended to be read cover to cover except, maybe, for your first time through. But the introductory sections do a wonderful job of giving bumble bees an identity and character of their own. We own too many Peterson and Audubon Guides, which never seem to be in the right place when you need them. But I wouldn't think of getting rid of any of them and have this one in the greenhouse and near our butterfly/bee garden.

Identification of Bumble bees is going through some bumps as visual science meets genetic science. Right now the geneticists are winning, to the detriment of the backyard naturalist. This book reflects some of this turmoil. When common names lack imagery and clarity, it is a reflection not of the authors but of the narrow field. There is much valuable information here. But there is also a whole lot of confusion. The authors are very knowledgeable, but not very helpful. Bumble bees that by all appearance are very different, including territory, are lumped together as one due to genetic similarities. The choices presented of color patterns are so diverse as to next to useless. Perhaps 46 species is way too few: many of these genetically similar bees have breeding populations that are distinct and distant. (The question is not, can they hybridize, but do they?) As others have also remarked, if I have to kill it in order to identify it, I don't want to know. I have good microscope skills and have done my share of dissecting. But I don't want to dissect every bee I see before naming it. It doesn't seem that these writers are bounded by that inhibition. I would like to see more regional field guides, and within the guides helpful identifying hints and markers. In time there will come more citizen scientists and advocate associations, and more manageable books will emerge. Butterflies have writers such as Nabokov and Robert Pyle and others, including thousands of butterfly chasers; bird watchers started with Audubon and later Bent and Peterson and many more since. Both Peterson and Pyle are great at showing what to look for - subtle visuals. Bumblebees are harder, but not as difficult as the writers sometimes make it. Although North American bumblebees have their advocates, they have not yet found their artists and writers and poets. In the mean-time, we

have books like this, filling a gap on the bookshelf but not really a field guide.

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