

Tree Bumblebee

Bombus hypnorum

Identification:

The Tree Bumblebee is easily separated from other bumblebees by its neat brown-black-white pattern, one shared by queens, workers and males. Abrasion on the thorax often results in a bare black spot in the middle. Confusion might arise from some hoverflies, but all bumblebees have long antennae (12-13 segments) while those of hoverflies are very short (3 segments).

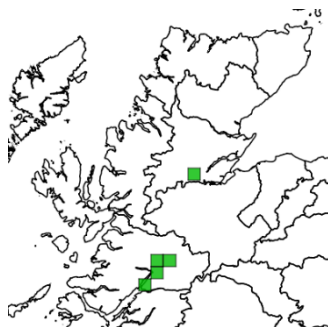


Tree Bumblebee
Bombus hypnorum.

Photo © Andre Karnwath.

Distribution:

The Tree Bumblebee was first recorded in the UK in 2001, in S England. Since then it spread rapidly northwards, and arrived in Highland in 2019. It appears to be colonising Highland from two directions - up the Great Glen, and along the Moray coast - and can be expected to expand much farther.



The distribution of records of the Tree Bumblebee in the HBRG database.

When to look for it:

Our data are too few to be sure about the flight season in Highland, but queens emerge relatively early and might be expected from May or earlier. Workers and males persist at least to August. They are frequent visitors to gardens, and typically nest in cavities, including bird-boxes.

Similar species:

Other bumblebees have white tails, but never in combination with a rich brown thorax and black midriff. The carder bees with a brown thorax never have a white tail.

Notes:

If you find a Tree Bumblebee, please photograph it for confirmation.