

black and gold bumble bee *Bombus auricomus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Hymenoptera

Family: Apidae

ILLINOIS STATUS uncommon, native

FEATURES

Coloration is somewhat variable. Color in the descriptions refers to “hair” color. The “hairs” are very short. The top of the head is yellow. The thorax has one or more yellow bands. The first abdominal segment may be yellow. The second and third abdominal segments are yellow. The tail is black. Wings are clear with black veins.

BEHAVIORS

These insects are long-tongued bees. They nest below the surface of the ground. They are often seen at bee balms (*Monarda* spp.), clovers (*Trifolium* spp.), St. John’s-worts (*Hypericum* spp.) and thoroughworts (*Eupatorium* spp.). They are important pollinators of the flowers that they visit to collect nectar and pollen. These are eusocial insects. Their life cycle includes egg, larva, pupa and adult stages. Only the fertilized queen overwinters from a colony. In the spring, she selects a nest site and constructs the nest, which is lined with plant materials. The first brood raised consists of all workers (females). The workers do all the jobs of the hive except egg-laying. Late in the year both males and queens are produced. Males mate with queens in the fall.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

marshes; peatlands; swamps; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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