

brown-belted bumble bee *Bombus griseocollis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Hymenoptera

Family: Apidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Coloration is somewhat variable. Queens and workers have yellow “hair” on the thorax and first abdominal segment. There may be a black spot between the wing bases. The second abdominal segment has a yellow or brown crescent. The “hair” on the tail is black. All “hairs” are short. Wings are clear with black veins.

BEHAVIORS

The brown-belted bumble bee is a medium-tongued bee. It is often seen at milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.), thistles (*Cirsium* spp.), sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.), goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.), sumacs (*Rhus* spp.) and loosestrifes (*Lythrum* spp.). This species nests on the surface of the ground. Queens are active from May through September. Workers are active from June through September. Males are active from July through October. These bees are important pollinators of the flowers that they visit to collect nectar and pollen. They 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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