

leafcutter bee *Megachile mendica*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Hymenoptera

Family: Megachilidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The female of this species is about one-third to one-half inch in length, while the male is slightly smaller. White hairs are abundant on the female's head. Hairs on the male's head are yellow-white. Like all bees, they have a thick body with the division between the thorax and abdomen easily seen, four wings, hairs, stocky legs, long antennae and eyes on the side of the head.

BEHAVIORS

This species is found statewide. Leafcutter bees paper their nest with pieces of leaves. These are solitary bees with huge jaws that nest in the soil. These bees are active from April through September. The pollen-collecting hairs on leafcutting bees are on the underside of the abdomen, not on the legs, as is the case in most other bees.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; marshes; peatlands; swamps; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

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

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