



Bumblebees

Aoibhinn Corrigan

aoibhinn.corrigan@daerani.gov.uk

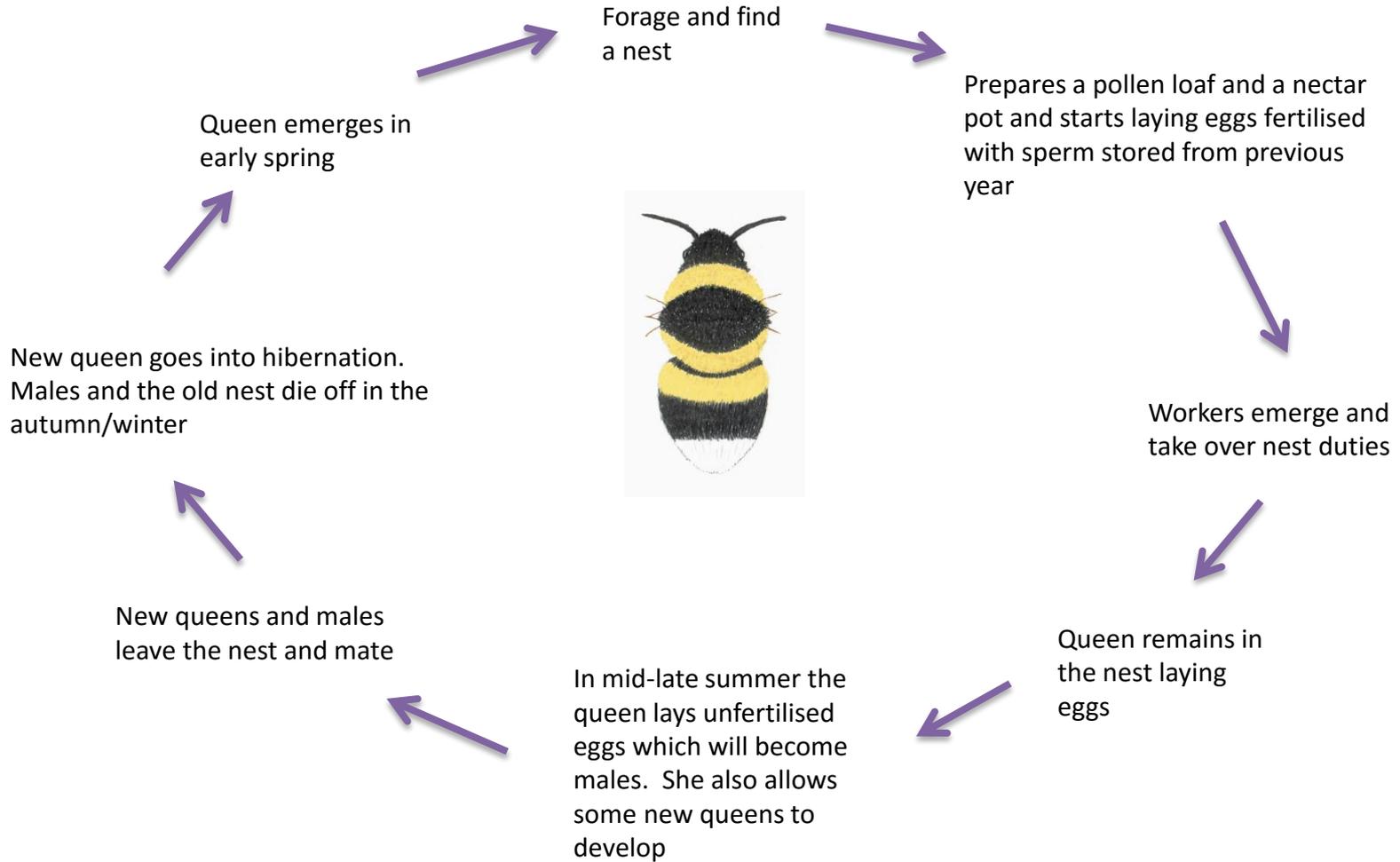
With some slides donated from Úna Fitzpatrick and
the Bumblebee Conservation Trust

What is a bumblebee?

- Furry
- Fat, round, large
- Buzzing
- Stripes are on hair, not skeleton underneath
- Pollen baskets (females only)



LIFE CYCLE: BUMBLEBEES



NESTING: BUMBLEBEES



© Joe Curtis



Noel Clohessy

Banding

— Position



— Strength



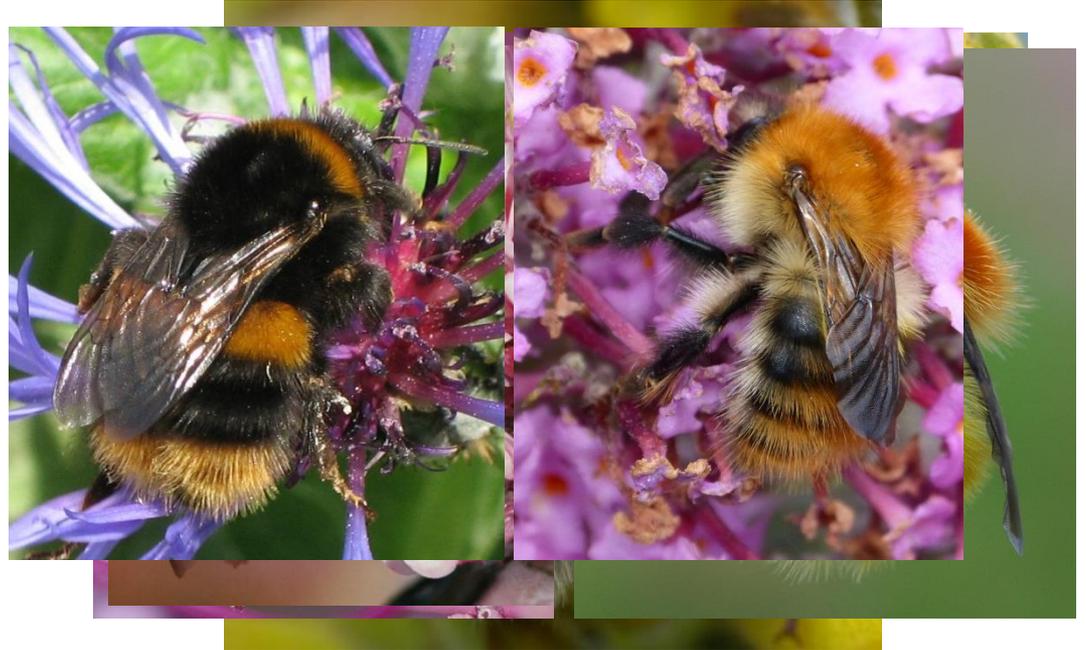
Tail colour

— White,

— Red or orange

— Yellow

— Buff or ginger



Legs

— Only female social bumblebees will be carrying pollen loads



The big six queens: common and widespread bumblebees



White-tailed bumblebee



Buff-tailed bumblebee



Garden bumblebee



Early bumblebee



Red-tailed bumblebee

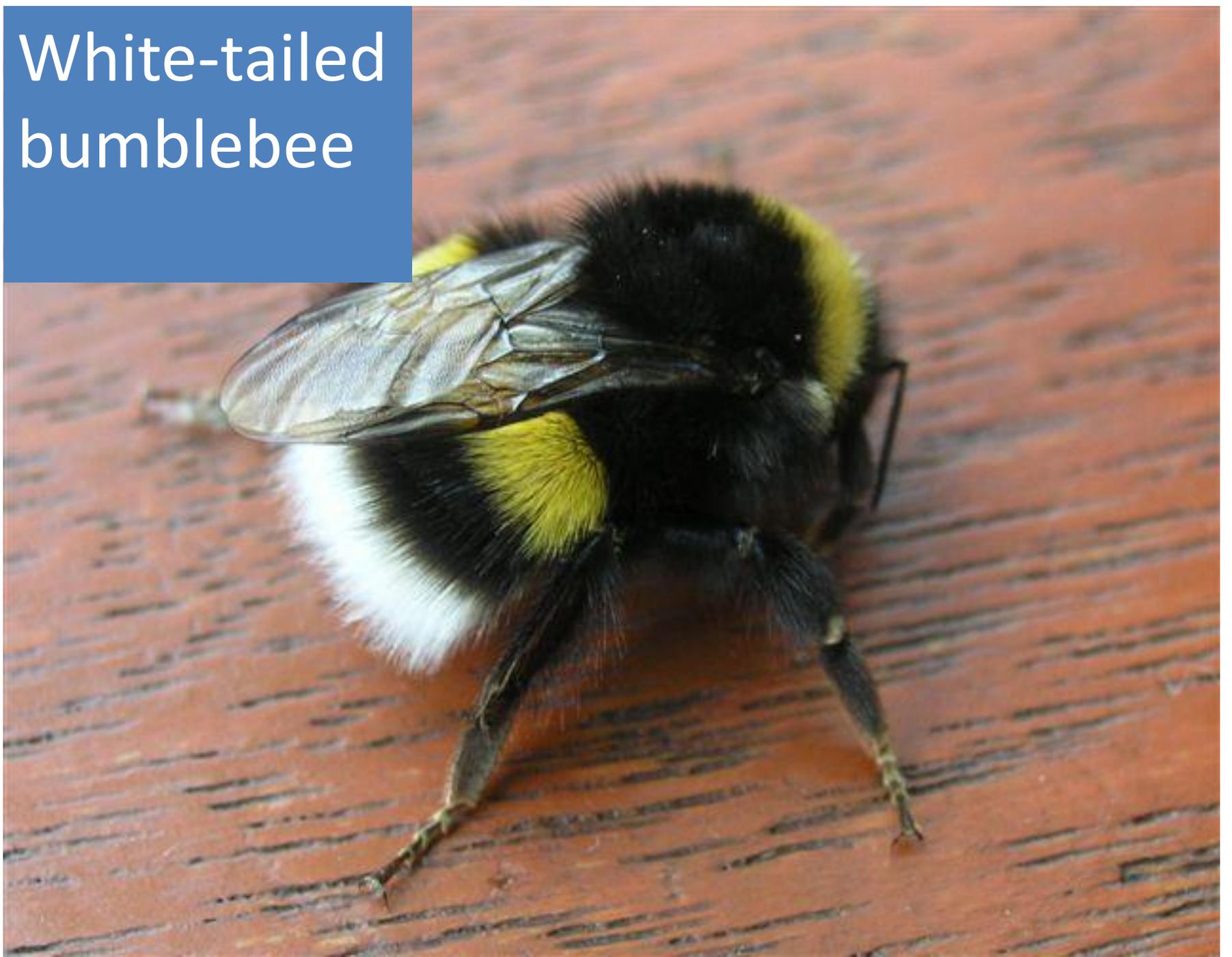


Common carder bee

DIFFERENT TYPES OF BUMBLEBEES



White-tailed bumblebee



Garden bumblebee



Buff-tailed bumblebee



Common carder bee



Red-tailed bumblebee



Early
bumblebee



FUSSY EATERS

Different species of bumblebee have different lengths of tongue which means they feed from different shaped flowers

Paul Corcoran



Short tongued
bumblebee
robbing nectar!

WHY ARE BEES DECLINING?

1. HABITAT LOSS

2. GENERAL DECLINE IN WILDFLOWERS



PROVIDE HOMES FOR BUMBLEBEES



Hedgerows or areas with long grass

PROVIDE FOOD FOR BEES



- ✓ Plant a range of native species to provide flowers for bees throughout the season from March-September.
- ✓ Leave an area of your lawn uncut during summer to allow Clovers and Bird's-foot Trefoil to flower.

HELP BEES IN SPRING



The bumblebee queen needs to keep her eggs at 30°C for ~4 days until they hatch.

In the early days of the nest it is estimated that a *Bombus terrestris* queen may have to visit as many as 6000 flowers/day to get enough nectar to maintain the heat needed to brood her eggs.

During every foraging trip the brood will cool down, so the trips should be short.

This is why it is vital that the nest is located close to rewarding flowers.

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FUTURE INVASIONS...

Mismatch between flowering dates of plants and emergence dates of pollinators. In the UK blackcurrant and its pollinators have diverged by 28 days since the 1970's.

The tree bumblebee (*Bombus hypnorum*) arrived in Britain in 2001 and is spreading rapidly. Hasn't been spotted in Ireland yet.

