



Bumblebee mystery

★ What do I do?

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1. Read the ACTIVITY CARD to familiarise yourself with the activity. Check the Resources list - see overleaf.
 2. Set the scene by talking about the email from the Buzzabout family and get the children thinking about what they know about bumblebees. It will be helpful to discuss pollination briefly.
 3. Give the children the *Pollinators* card sort (see Resources list). Ask them to sort the cards and talk about the differences between bumblebees, bees, wasps and other insects.
 4. Give them the Pollinator identification key to check their ideas (see Resources list). This will help with identification when doing the survey.
 5. Give them time to think about how to carry out their survey. You will probably have to tell them which site/s they can visit.

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6. Once they have completed the observation, let them discuss their results. What did they find?
 7. Give them the *Bumblebee-friendly plants* card sort (see Resources list) to sort into those that are growing in the area and those they would like to introduce. They can use their ideas to plan how to bring more bumblebees and other pollinators into the area.
 8. Alternatively they could create a guide for other people to use to help them attract bumblebees and other pollinators.
 8. There are extra challenges on the ACTIVITY CARD. These can be used if there is any spare time or if the children want to try out more ideas at home and earn a bonus sticker.



★ Handy hints

Resources

- ★ Pollinator identification key
- ★ *Pollinators* card sort
- ★ *Bumblebee-friendly plants* card sort
- ★ These can be downloaded from www.britishecienceassociation.org/creststar/outdoors-active

Things to look out for

- ★ It is possible that you will not find bumblebees, but it is important to let the children find out for themselves if there are any. They can note other pollinators that they find.
- ★ Lack of bumblebees leads naturally into designing a more bumblebee-friendly environment. If you are able to make some changes, you can carry out more observations to see if they have had an impact.

Background information

- ★ There are about 250 species of bumblebee around the world and 25 in the UK. Six of these are commonly found. The decline of bumblebees seems likely to be due to changes in farming practices, the use of insecticides and the lack of natural habitats. This decline threatens biodiversity, food supplies and human health. A significant proportion of our food relies on pollinators such as bumblebees.
- ★ British bumblebees live in many different environments. Most areas should be able to attract them; sometimes they just need some encouragement by planting the right type of plants.

Safety

- ★ Ensure children do not touch any plants or animals
- ★ Find out if any children have allergies to bee stings.
- ★ Follow your organisation's guidelines for outdoor work.

How they can share their ideas

- ★ Children can make a chart of their observations. They can create a plan or guide to show how to make the area more bumblebee-friendly.

