

Common Maryland Bees

Over 400 species of bees have been documented in Maryland. Bees are extremely beneficial insects that are responsible for pollinating many different species of flowering plants. Bees also serve as an important food resource for some species of wildlife. For more information, check out the Wild Acres page:

dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wabees.aspx



Honey bee (*Apis mellifera*)

by: Francisco Posada, USGS Bee Lab

The honey bee has a light to dark brown body with pale and dark hairs in bands on its abdomen. One of our most well-known species of bee, it is **not native**. Honey bees have pollen baskets on their "thighs" (see the hairs?), a barrel-shaped abdomen and heart-shaped head. They also have hairy eyes!

Honey bees live in colonies, often in man-made structures or in cavities.



Leaf cutting bee (*Megachile* spp.)

by: Sam Droege, USGS Bee Lab

At least 20 species of leaf cutting bees have been documented in MD. These bee species are black and furry. Leaf cutting bees use their large mouthparts to cut distinct circles out of leaves to use for their nests. Unlike honey bees, leaf cutting bees carry pollen beneath their abdomen. Some species have pointy abdomens.

Leaf cutting bees are solitary, but they will nest in aggregations.



Bumble bee (*Bombus* spp.)

by: Kent McFarland, Flickr CC

Over 10 species of bumble bees are found in Maryland. Bumble bees are robust with black bodies covered by yellow hairs.

Bumble bees often nest underground in abandoned rodent burrows.



Large carpenter bee (*Xylocopa virginica*)

by: Jesse Christopherson, Flickr CC

Carpenter bees look similar to bumble bees, but carpenter bees are mostly lacking hair on their shiny abdomen. Often, these bees fly fast and erratically.

Carpenter bees burrow into wood to nest.

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Squash bee (*Peponapis pruinosa*)

by: Jesse Christopherson, Flickr CC

These tiny bees have brown bodies covered in dense, light hair on the thorax. The abdomen is banded. Squash bees have long antennae and appear to have a long “nose”.

Squash bees nest in the ground, often by squash and pumpkins.



Mining bee (*Andrena spp.*)

by: Sam Droege, USGS bee lab

Over 80 species of mining bees can be found in Maryland. Typically, mining bees are black with light or dark hairs and have a slender body. They carry their pollen on their rear legs and side of thorax.

Mining bees dig solitary nests in the ground, preferring sandy soils.



Sweat bee (Halictidae)

by: Sam Droege, USGS bee lab

Sweat bees have two color forms: a metallic green color or a black/brown color with light bands of hair. Some species are attracted to salt in sweat.

Sweat bees nest in the soil and are solitary to communal nesters.



Mason bee (*Osmia spp.*)

by: Sam Droege, USGS bee lab

Mason bees also have two color forms: a dull metallic green-blue color or a black covered with pale hair. The head is as wide as the thorax in these bees.

Mason bees nest in pre-existing holes lined with mud they collect. They are solitary nesters but will nest in aggregations.