



BWARS

Information Sheet

Tree Bee (*Bombus hypnorum*)

Stuart Roberts

- * Important wild pollinator of Fruit trees
- * New coloniser of the UK
- * Highly distinctive colour pattern
- * **Can you add to our knowledge?**

Featuring:

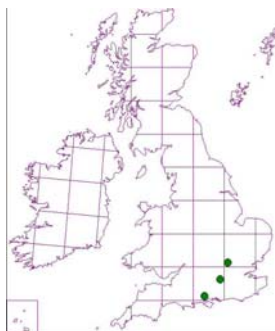
- Background information
- Distribution in UK and the world
- Habitat requirements
- Conservation

History and Distribution in UK

The Tree Bee (*Bombus hypnorum*) was first reported in the UK in the summer of 2001 from a specimen found on the Hampshire/Wiltshire border. In the years immediately following its discovery, it appeared regularly in the Southampton area, and new populations were found in Hertfordshire. Since 2007, there has been a massive expansion of range and recorded abundance. Records have come in from as far north as Northumberland, and as far west as South Wales.



A queen of *Bombus hypnorum* at rest on a leaf



UK distribution of *Bombus hypnorum* 2004

On continental Europe, the species is widespread and plentiful and can be found even on the Kola Peninsula in Arctic Russia. Primarily, it is a bee of lowland sites, and is strongly associated with parks and gardens.

It is predominantly an early season species. The queens emerge from hibernation in February or early March, and workers are active throughout the early spring. The species is at its most obvious in late May and June, when the colonies are producing males. A partial second brood is active in the summer.



Visiting Alkanet flowers. Showing unique colour pattern



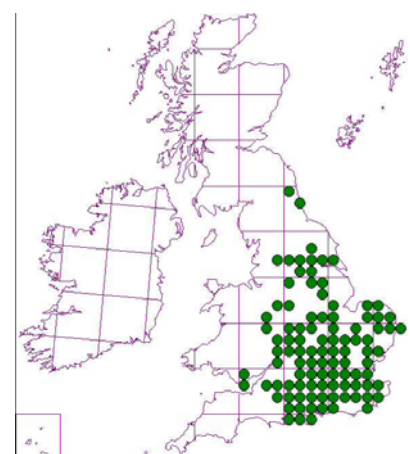
Habitat and Conservation

Bombus hypnorum regularly establishes colonies in cavities above ground, and this includes roof spaces, rot holes in trees and in bird nest boxes.

The bees are found in a variety of habitats, from woodlands, roadside verges and scrubby grasslands, to town parks, gardens and allotments. The bees are regularly found visiting flowers of fruit trees and fruit bearing plants such as bramble and raspberry, where they can be effective pollinators and improve crop yield.

The bee has the potential to colonise the whole of Great Britain, and is unlikely to impact negatively on other species.

No special conservation measures are necessary.



Distribution in UK at end of 2009



B. hypnorum nest in a bird box

Hymettus Ltd is the premier source of advice on the conservation of bees, wasps and ants within Great Britain and Ireland.

<http://hymettus.org.uk/>

BWARS, The Bees Wasps & Ants Recording Society is the national recording scheme which provides the only source of fully validated data on the UK bee, wasp & ant fauna.

<http://www.bwars.com/>

For further information, and submission of records

contact: spmr@msn.com

Photos by: J. Oliver, L. Hebdon & T. Bantock