

Bee identification chart

Nine bees and bee groups | Eastern United States, with a Mid-Atlantic focus | Online Field Guide

Compare hair, abdominal pattern and body shape. A group-level result may be more reliable than a species name.

1. Western honey bee

Apis mellifera

Female worker | specimen



Golden-brown hairs and a banded abdomen

2. Common eastern bumble bee

Bombus impatiens

Female queen | specimen



Fuzzy body; one pale abdominal band

3. Eastern carpenter bee

Xylocopa virginica

Female | specimen



Large bee with a shiny black abdomen

4. Blue orchard mason bee

Osmia lignaria

Female | specimen



Compact, hairy bee with a blue sheen

5. Leafcutter bees

Megachile spp.

Female | example species



Pale hair bands; pollen carried underneath

6. Bicolored striped sweat bee

Agapostemon virescens

Female | specimen

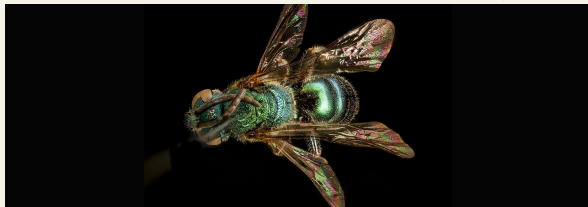


Green front; dark, pale-banded abdomen

7. Pure green sweat bee

Augochlora pura

Male | specimen

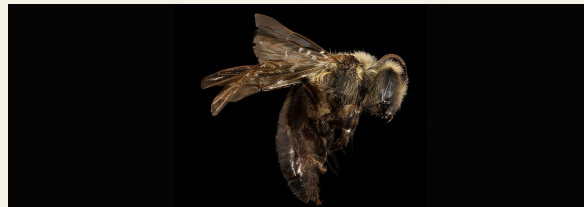


Metallic green across the whole body

8. Mining bees

Andrena spp.

Female | example species



Hairy thorax; nesting burrows in soil

9. Two-spotted longhorn bee

Melissodes bimaculatus

Female | specimen



Black bee with pale leg hairs and two spots

Field limits: compare several features and record the place/date. Do not handle bees or disturb nests to identify them.

Photos: USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab and credited photographers. Leafcutter: Brooke Alexander/USGS, *Megachile rotundata*, F, Side, CC BY 2.0. Linked sources, full title and credits on page 2.

<https://www.online-field-guide.com/>

Comparison notes and photo credits

Companion to the nine-photo chart | US Letter landscape | Original layout and wording by Online Field Guide

Bee or group	Nesting clue	Identification limit	Season
Western honey bee	Hive or sheltered cavity; a large colony	Species	Spring to fall, on suitable warm days
Common eastern bumble bee	A colony in a sheltered cavity, often below ground	Species candidate	Spring to fall
Eastern carpenter bee	Tunnels excavated in wood	Species candidate	Spring and summer
Blue orchard mason bee	Existing cavities with mud partitions	Mason-bee group first	Spring
Leafcutter bees	Often cavities lined with cut leaf pieces	Group; photographed species named	Mainly summer
Bicolored striped sweat bee	Soil burrows; females may share an entrance	Species candidate; female pattern	Late spring and summer
Pure green sweat bee	Decaying wood	Green sweat-bee group first	Warm months
Mining bees	Individual burrows in soil, sometimes clustered	Group; photographed species named	Many in spring; some species later
Two-spotted longhorn bee	Burrows in soil	Species candidate	Summer

Season is a broad regional guide. Weather, latitude, sex and species affect timing. Leafcutter and mining entries cover genera, not a single species.

Photo credits and source links

1. **Western honey bee** (*Apis mellifera*). USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab from Beltsville, Maryland, USA.
2. **Common eastern bumble bee** (*Bombus impatiens*). USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab from Beltsville, Maryland, USA.
3. **Eastern carpenter bee** (*Xylocopa virginica*). Hannah Sutton / USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab.
4. **Blue orchard mason bee** (*Osmia lignaria*). Sue Boo / USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab.
5. **Leafcutter bees** (photo: *Megachile rotundata*). Brooke Alexander / USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab. CC BY 2.0.
6. **Bicolored striped sweat bee** (*Agapostemon virescens*). USGS Native Bee Inventory and Monitoring Laboratory from Beltsville, USA.
7. **Pure green sweat bee** (*Augochlora pura*). Amanda Robinson / USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab.
8. **Mining bees** (photo: *Andrena vicina*). Sydney Price / USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab.
9. **Two-spotted longhorn bee** (*Melissodes bimaculatus*). Kelly Graninger / USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab.

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Biology: Penn State bee ecology; eastern bumble-bee guide; USDA blue orchard bee; CSU leafcutter bees; MDC sweat bee. Full per-card references are in the web guide.