

# Bees

## What do they look like?

They are stripy yellow and black and have six legs. All bees have a head, thorax (middle section) and an abdomen (end section).

## There are four types of bees:

### Bumble bees

These nest in the earth or under sheds etc. They are larger and more colourful than honey bees, with rounded abdomens, usually with a red or yellow band on the end. They only sting if squeezed or a brood nest is broken up. In most cases the numbers in a nest are in the hundreds, rather than thousands.

### Masonry bees

These nest in sand, earth, lawns and soft mortar. They may look like honey bees, but are much smaller. The bees are unlikely to sting as the majority have too weak a sting to penetrate the human skin. These bees are solitary, although they live in colonies.

### Tawny mining bee

These feed at currant and gooseberry flowers (especially the brightly coloured female). They commonly nest in lawns, with a small mound around the opening. As with the masonry bees, their sting is too weak to penetrate the skin.

### Honey bees

These become a problem when they swarm, usually in May and June when the weather is warm and humid.

## Swarming

As the size of the colony increases and a new queen emerges, the old queen with about half of the workers leaves the hive in search of a new colony. This process may take some time and the swarm may land on branches of trees or parts of buildings before finding a permanent home.

## How do you treat and control bees?

Bees are not classified as pests as they are essential for the pollination of fruit and flowers and honey bees for the production of honey.

They should therefore not be destroyed, unless they have established themselves in a place where they cannot be collected by a beekeeper, and present a threat to humans or pets. Beekeepers are willing to collect swarms as a swarm can be relocated in a hive for honey production.

Where an infestation of masonry bees is heavy and persistent, advice and assistance should be sought from a professional pest controller.

### Residents can prevent infestations by:

1. Filling in with cement/mortar or other suitable external filling compound:
  - a. holes around pipes and cables where services (gas, water, electricity) enter the house.
  - b. Any holes around overflows, sink waste pipes, soil pipes and chimneys.
  - c. Gaps/holes where roof tiles meet the soffit boards. Use crumpled wire mesh, and then fill in
2. Re-point loose/missing mortar in brickwork.
3. Seal outside window and door panels with mastic. Seal inside window and doorframes with general-purpose household sealer.
4. Cover air vents or airbricks with fine zinc gauze, fixed securely.



## Knowsley Pest Control Service:

We do not under normal circumstances treat bees but we can help and provide reassurance that the infestation is bees rather than wasps.

**There will however be a charge if you request a pest control operative to visit your property even if no treatment is made.**

Commercial pest control companies are listed in the Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.