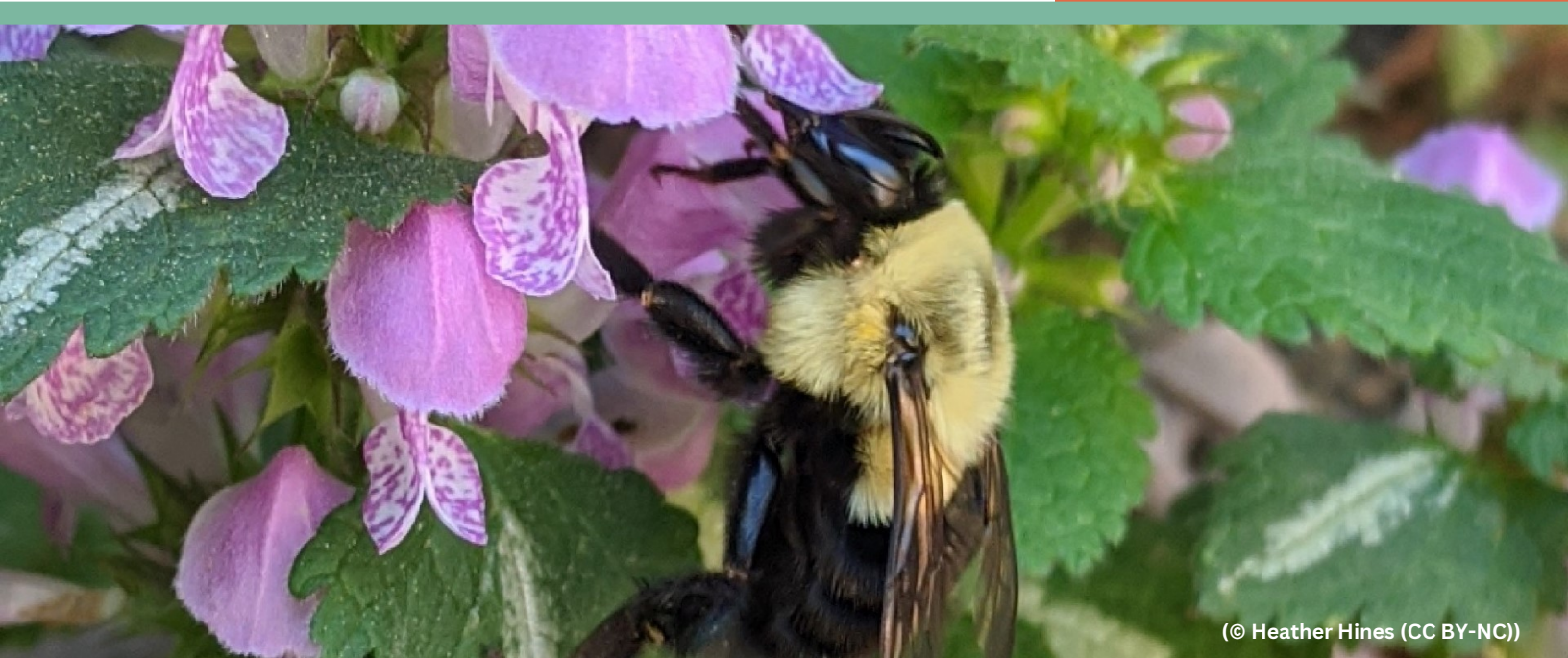


COMMON EASTERN BUMBLE BEE

Hymenoptera: Apidae

Bombus impatiens

Bug of the Month



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The common eastern bumble bee is the most abundant bumble bee species in eastern North America and the most common bumble bee found in Pennsylvania.

Due their large colony size (300-500 individuals) and ease of rearing, *B. impatiens* are sold commercially for pollinating crops like greenhouse-grown tomatoes whose flowers do not easily release pollen without being buzz pollinated. Here, bees shake the flower by vibrating their wing muscles at a specific frequency, and the

pollen falls onto the bee. Honey bees cannot buzz pollinate, but bumble bees and some other bee species can.

B. impatiens is also widely used as a model for scientific research on bumble bees in North America, revealing insights on their memory and learning, disease transmission and susceptibility, sociality and the colony cycle, effects of climate and pesticides, and floral preferences.

B. impatiens has generalized floral preferences, but some of

their favorite local plants are bee balm, mints, thistles, coneflower, wild blueberry, and a variety of legume species.

While bumble bees nest in available cavities of diverse types, *B. impatiens* prefers underground cavities, such as those abandoned by rodents.

For more information on bumble bee life history, visit the Center for Pollinator Research website.



pollinators.psu.edu

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