

Beneficial Insects



Carder Bees

Common and Scientific Names

- Common name: Wool carder bee
- Scientific name: *Anthidium manicatum*

Description

Carder bees are the size of a honeybee but are brightly marked with yellow on a black background and a bright yellow face. Males are a bit larger than females and have darker markings with spikes visible from the abdomen.

Males are known to be aggressively territorial. Once reaching maturity they start patrolling territories visited by females. They will attack other bees, flies, and even small birds, like hummingbirds.

They are a solitary bee that nests in existing cavities including cracks in walls, building foundations and knotholes or drill holes in wood.

Life Cycle

Carder bees stock their nests with a mixture of pollen and nectar to support the growth of a single larva. Pollen and nectar may be collected from many kinds of plants, but most often from plants in the mint family. Females lay an egg in the pollen/nectar plug, seal it with plant hairs, and then repeat the process.

The young bee develops within the nest cell, rapidly consuming the pollen/nectar provided. It will then pupate and later emerge as an adult.

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Habitat and Preferred Plants

Carder bees create nest cells from balls of hairs shaved from leaves and stems. These are typically collected from lamb's-ear, but other hairy-leaved plants, such as mullein, may also be used as a source for plant hairs.

Pollen and nectar for the bee larva are typically gathered from mint, although adult bees may visit other plants, too.

What We Can Do to Support Them and Increase Their Numbers

Maintain flowering plants to provide food and nesting habitats for pollinators and provide a diversity of plants that will bloom from early spring until late fall.

Converting lawn sections into habitats for pollinators can also support carder bee populations.

Source:

- <https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=15561>
- <https://webdoc.agsci.colostate.edu/bspm/arthropodsofcolorado/WoolCarderBee.pdf>
- https://bohart.ucdavis.edu/uploads/5/6/2/5/56256413/note_50_wool_carder_bee.pdf
- <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/sewmg/files/2011/02/UW-Native-bees-2.pdf>