

BEES OF FLORIDA



Did you know there are over 320 species of bees in Florida, and over 4,000 in the United States? This is an abridged introductory guide of some of the common bee groups and species you may encounter in Florida.



Wild bees vary widely in behavior, color, size, and shape. Just look at the range of sizes you may encounter in the figure to the left. Note that the bees in this guide are not to scale.

SIZE: 2-5

SWEAT BEES

Sweat bees of the family Halictidae are a diverse and common group of bees with over 65 species in Florida. These small-to-medium and often brilliantly metallic colored bees are attracted to sweat and will often land on your skin for a drink.



Agapostemon splendens ♂



Augochlora pura ♀



Lasioglossum versatum ♀



Halictus confusus ♀

SIZE: 4-6

LEAFCUTTER BEES

Leafcutters are a diverse group of solitary bees of the family Megachilidae, known for cutting round segments of leaves used to line their nest cells. They are most easily identified by the pollen-carrying hairs, called scopa, under their abdomens.



Megachile integrella ♀



Megachile texana ♀



Megachile pseudobrevis



Megachile campanulae ♂

SIZE: 3-7

MASON BEES

Mason bees of the family Megachilidae are often blue in color but can be black with striped abdomens. Most of the 14 mason bee species in Florida are within the genus *Osmia*. They are known for lining their nest cavities and entrances with mud.



Osmia atriventris ♀



Osmia chalybea ♂



Hoplitis truncata ♀



Hoplitis plosifrons ♀

SIZE: 8-10

BUMBLE BEES

The social bumble bee is most easily identified by their robust size, hairy abdomens, and pollen baskets on female hind legs, similar to honey bees. The hairs on the abdomen vary in color including black, yellow, white, red, and orange.



Bombus griseocollis



Bombus impatiens



Bombus impatiens queen ♀



Bombus bimaculatus ♀

SIZE: 9-10 (XYLOCOPA), 0-1 (CERATINA)

CARPENTER BEES

These are wood-boring bees of the family Apidae. In Florida, carpenter bees of the genus *Xylocopa* are very large, and bees of genus *Ceratina* are very small. *Xylocopa* species are sometimes mistaken for bumble bees but have a smooth abdomen.



Xylocopa virginica ♀



Xylocopa micans ♀



Ceratina dupla ♀



Ceratina cockerelli ♂

SIZE: 3-8

LONG-HORNED BEES

Long-horned bees are known as the Eucerine bees of the family Apidae. Known for their long antennae in the males only, these bees include some important pollinators for squash and asters. Some male squash bees will sleep in flowers overnight.



Melissodes communis ♂



Eucera rosae ♀



Melissodes bimaculata ♂



Svastra aegis ♂

SIZE: 1-4

MINING BEES

Mining bees are a diverse group of ground-nesting bees in the family Andrenidae. In Florida there are two genera, *Andrena* (medium-sized bees) and *Perdita* (very small bees), which account for over 50 total species statewide.



Andrena banksi ♂



Andrena confederata ♂



Perdita bishoppi ♀



Perdita bradleyi ♀

SIZE: 2-4

PLASTERER BEES

Plasterer, or cellophane bees, get their name from the cellophane-like substance that they create to line their nests. Plasterer bees make up roughly 26 species statewide in two groups: genus *Colletes* and genus *Hylaeus* (yellow-faced bees).



Colletes validus ♂



Colletes distinctus ♀



Hylaeus georgicus ♂



Hylaeus modestus ♂

SIZE: 2-5

CUCKOO BEES

Cuckoo bees are kleptoparasitic nest parasites of other bees. This means a female will enter another bee's nest and lay her eggs on pollen and food prepared by the other bee. Over time, these bees have lost much of their pollen-carrying hairs.



Nomada australis ♂



Triepeolus lunatus ♀



Coelioxys germana ♂



Coelioxys octodentata ♂

HONEY BEES

Honey bees are ubiquitous, medium-sized bees that live in large colonies and are used intensively for agricultural pollination, honey production, and as a hobbyist pastime. There is only one honey bee species in Florida, the non-native European honey bee. Most honey bees in Florida are from managed hives, but feral colonies are also common.



Honey bee photo courtesy Alex Wild. www.alexanderwild.com