

Funding for bumble bee conservation provided by the CS Fund. Guide developed and illustrated by Elaine Evans, The Xerces Society. Thanks to Dr. Robbin Thorp, UC Davis.

If you find *Bombus occidentalis*, please contact [bumblebees@xerces.org](mailto:bumblebees@xerces.org). Visit [www.xerces.org/bumblebees](http://www.xerces.org/bumblebees) for more information.

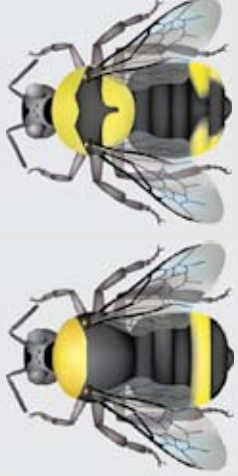
The western bumble bee was once commonly found in the western United States and Canada. They can still be found in northern and eastern parts of their historic range, but populations from southern British Columbia to central California have nearly disappeared in recent years. Your efforts to search for this bee will help document their current range. The Xerces Society and scientists studying bumble bee decline will use this information to promote conservation of remaining *B. occidentalis* populations.



Map based on Milliron 1971, *A Monograph of the Western Hemisphere Bumblebees*.

**Historic range of *Bombus occidentalis***

**Similar female bees with yellow on the 4th abdominal segment**



*Bombus californicus*  
*Bombus suckleyi* (cuckoo bee)



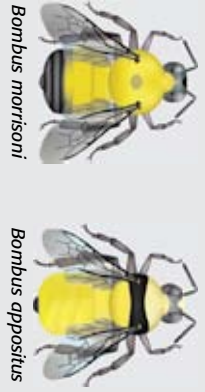
*Bombus femaldae* (cuckoo bee)

These look-a-like bees have yellow hair on the 4th abdominal segment, as opposed to *B. occidentalis* with black or white hair on the 4th abdominal segment.

There are around 30 bumble bee species present in western North America. Females of some of the most commonly found bees are pictured here. Some species pictured have varieties with different coloration.

For more identification information, visit [www.discoverlife.org](http://www.discoverlife.org) and [www.bugguide.net](http://www.bugguide.net)

**Other common bumble bees of western North America**



*Bombus morrisoni*  
*Bombus appositus*



*Bombus mixtus*



*Bombus nevadensis*



*Bombus huntii*

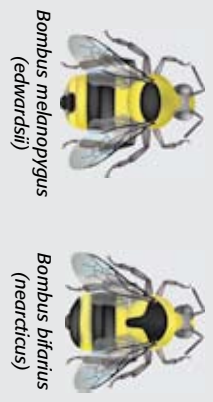


*Bombus griseocollis*



*Bombus melanopygus*  
*Bombus bifarius*

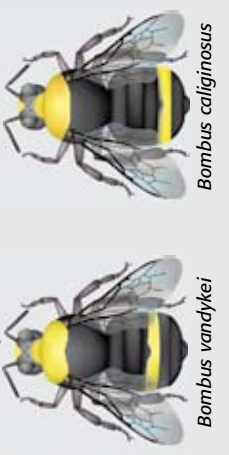
Found in the mountains and northern areas



*Bombus melanopygus* (edwardsi)  
*Bombus bifarius* (nearcticus)

Found in coastal areas

**Similar female bees with yellow on the head**



*Bombus caliginosus*  
*Bombus vandykei*



*Bombus insularis* (cuckoo bee)

These look-a-like bees have prominent yellow hair on the face, as opposed to *B. occidentalis* with all black hair on the face.



Black-headed bee



Yellow-headed bee

**Common female *Bombus occidentalis* varieties**



Central coastal California  
Northern California to British Columbia, east to Montana



Rocky Mountains to Alaska

These three varieties of *B. occidentalis* represent the most commonly found color patterns. Some bees are intermediate between these varieties.

[www.xerces.org/bumblebees](http://www.xerces.org/bumblebees)  
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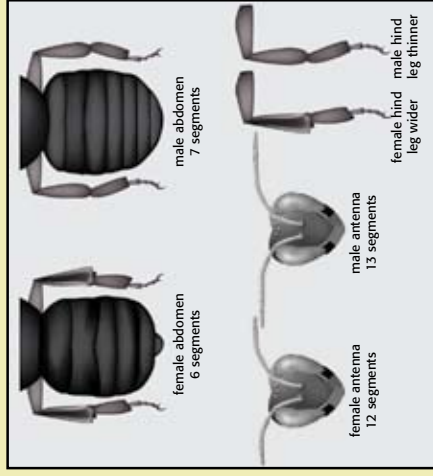


Photo by Derrick Ditchburn

**POCKET GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING THE WESTERN BUMBLE BEE *BOMBUS OCCIDENTALIS***

**Male or female ?**

Females have 6 abdominal segments versus 7 in males. Females have 12 antennal segments versus 13 in males. Female hind legs are wider than male hind legs.



Females are found through spring, summer and early fall. Workers and queens are both female. Males can be common in late summer and early fall. Females have pollen baskets (an indentation onto which they sometimes pack pollen) on their hind legs, and shorter antennae and abdomens. Males sometimes have larger eyes and longer hair. Bumble bees pictured and described in this guide are all female bees.