

Your Buzzing Garden!

March

The month of March is often the first month that feels like spring for us, and the same is true for insects. When early plants start to bloom, some of the more intrepid pollinators will emerge, and these initial flowers provide an essential food source. The plants gain something too! They get the bonus attention from pollinators before competition increases in later spring and summer. Read on to see some of the insects you may find in your garden this month!



Early bumblebee (*Bombus pratorum*):

As spring begins, early bumblebee queens emerge from hibernation and build strength by foraging early flowers, before searching for a site to start their nests. These bees are easiest to spot at this time of year before they settle down and start laying eggs, and they can be identified by two yellow stripes and a red tail.



Hairy footed flower bee (*Anthophora plumipes*):

These bees are out now, with males found flying along pathways searching for a mate. Although they are very territorial, they cannot sting. Look out for their distinctive hairy feet that give them their name.



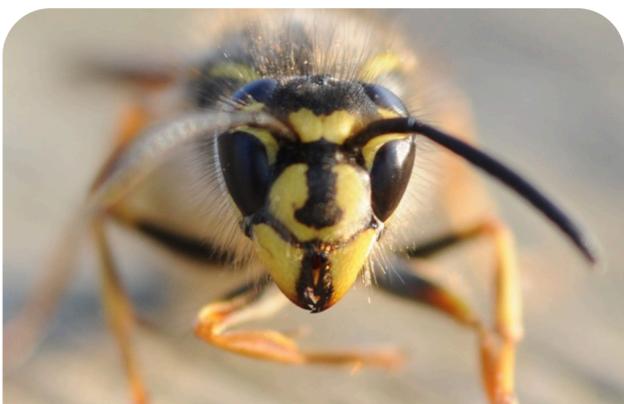
Brimstone butterfly (*Gonepteryx rhamni*):

Several species of butterflies emerge in early spring, as they overwinter as adults. This is true for the Brimstone. These fairly large butterflies are common in England and can be found in grasslands, woodlands, verges, hedgerows, and gardens. The males are a more neon yellow compared to the paler females and easy to spot on a spring day.



Comma butterfly (*Polygonia c-album*):

Another early butterfly that overwinters as an adult, these insects have a flexible life cycle that allows them to take advantage of favourable weather conditions. They have a striking tiger-print pattern on their forewings and are so-called due to a white 'comma' mark on their underwings.



Common wasp (*Vespa vulgaris*):

In spring, you can often see social wasp queens, such as yellow-jacket queens, coming out of hibernation (called diapause in insects). One of only nine social wasp species in the UK, these insects are not only important pollinators but also eat flies, aphids, caterpillars, and other common garden pests.

Flowers of early spring:

- Lesser Celandine
- Wood Anemone
- Gorse
- Primrose
- Bluebells
- Crocus (Join our #crocuschallenge!)

