

## Meet Houston's newest native bee, the Brown-Belted Bumble Bee!

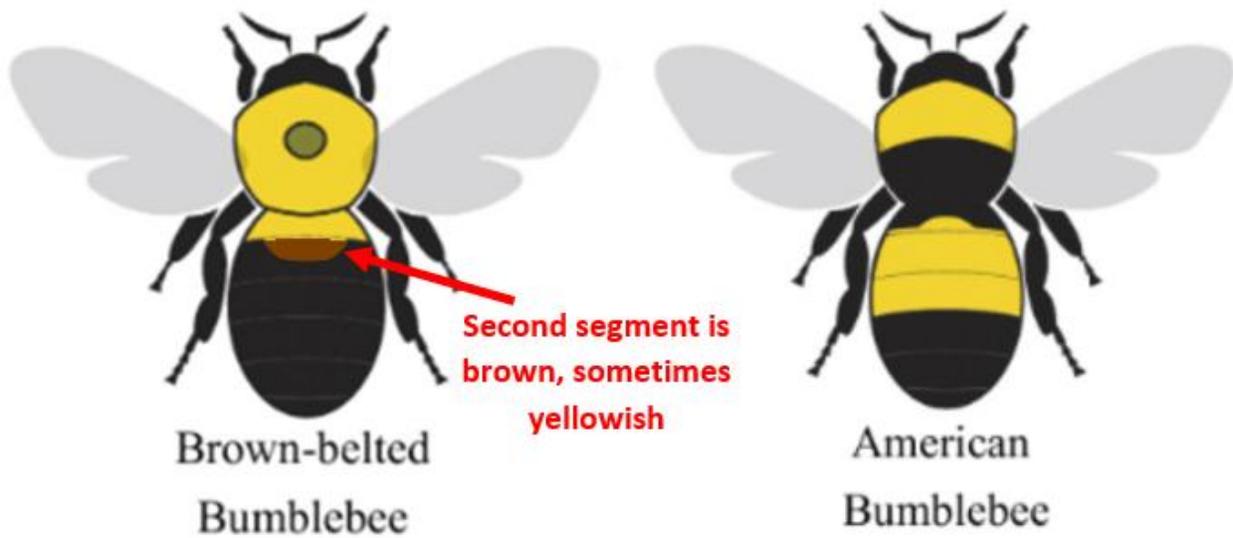


Brown-Belted Bumble Bee ([Bombus griseocollis](#)). Image iNaturalist

The Brown-Belted Bumble Bee is rarely seen in the Southwest although it has a broad range across the eastern and northern United States and Canada. (see Xerces Bumble Bee Atlas)

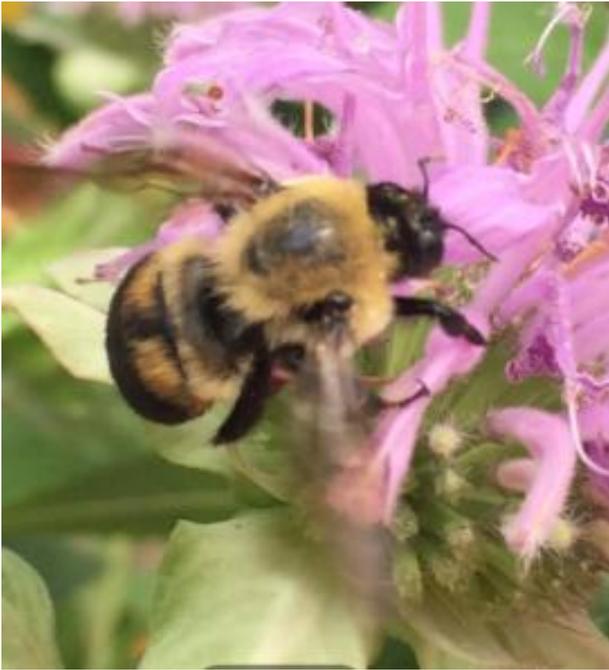
The first recorded sighting of the Brown-Belted Bumble Bee in Houston was in 2019 in Katy by iNaturalist observer prairiegrass. Up to that time Houston had recorded only one bumble bee species, the American Bumble Bee ([Bombus pensylvanicus](#)).

The Brown-Belted Bumble Bee is one of our largest fuzzy bees with queens up to 1 inch long.



Images ©Texas Parks and Wildlife  
From TPWD Bumble Bee Identification

Both bumble bee species are similarly sized but have different color markings. Texas Parks and Wildlife created a handy [guide to bumble bees](#) that can help you distinguish between them in your yard.



Named for the distinctive brown stripe around its abdomen, it can quickly be identified by its yellow thorax with a dark spot in the middle.

Notice the second abdominal stripe is brownish-yellow.

*Image Brown-Belted Bumble Bee*

The Brown-Belted Bumble Bee can be confused with our most common large bee, the Texas Carpenter Bee ([Xylocopa virginica texana](#)) because they both have a dark spot on their back.



The major difference between carpenter bees and bumble bees is carpenter bees have bare, hairless abdomens past the first segment while bumble bees are completely covered in hair.

They also have different lifestyles. Carpenter bees dig nests in wood, while bumble bees make nests in the ground.

*Image Texas Carpenter Bee*

Since 2019 there have only been a few other reported sightings along I-10 heading inward toward the Heights. Citizen scientist reports like these allow researchers to monitor and track species, and signing up for an account on [iNaturalist](#) is free.

With declines in bumble bee species, positive news like a new bumble bee is welcome. If you want to help provide food for them, here is a list of our top 10 pollinator plants, [www.houstonnativebees.org/learn/bee-habitats-2/](http://www.houstonnativebees.org/learn/bee-habitats-2/)