

# The Yellow or Golden Northern Bumble bee *Bombus fervidus*

## A Species of Greatest Conservation Need



*Bombus fervidus* Yellow bumble bee

During our Rhode Island bumble bee survey (2019-2021) we saw or collected 40 specimens of *Bombus fervidus*. This was 0.41% of the total number of bees observed or collected (9,546). IUCN's assessment of *Bombus fervidus* in 2014 was "vulnerable": "If this species' relative abundance continues to decline at the same rate, ***we project that the species will go extinct in the next 70-80 years*** (2094).

### Conservation Actions:

- Restoration, creation, and preservation of native plants and natural grassland habitats.
- Restriction of harmful pesticide use on or near suitable habitat.
- Protection of species from diseases introduced by managed bees.

### Flower species that support populations of *Bombus fervidus*:

**Specifically for pollen (very important for protein to make more bees):** *Rosa nitida*, *Rosa palustris*, *Rosa virginiana*  
<https://gegearlab.weebly.com/plant-list.html>



*Rosa carolina*  
Carolina rose  
June-Aug.



*Rubus odoratus*  
Flowering raspberry  
June-July



*Spiraea alba*  
Meadowsweet  
June-Sept.



*Spiraea tomentosa*  
Steeplebush  
Aug.-Sept.

**Nectar sources (important for carbohydrates for energy):** <https://gegearlab.weebly.com/plant-list.html> *B. fervidus* is a long-tongue bee that is attracted to many flowers with deep corollas.



*Pedicularis canadensis*  
Wood betony  
April-May



*Penstemon hirsutus*  
Northeastern beardtongue  
May-June



*Penstemon digitalis*  
Foxglove beardtongue  
May-July



*Lupinus perennis*  
Wild lupine  
May-July



*Astragalus canadensis*  
Canada milkvetch  
May-July



*Prunella vulgaris*  
Common selfheal  
June-Aug.



*Baptisia tinctoria*  
Yellow wild indigo  
June-Aug.



*Monarda didyma*  
Scarlet bee balm  
June-Aug.



*Lathyrus japonicus*  
Beach vetchling  
June-Aug.



*Mimulus ringens*  
Allegheny monkey-flower  
June-Sept.



*Pontederia cordata*  
Pickerelweed  
June-Sept.



*Monarda fistulosa*  
Bee balm  
July-Sept.



*Agastache scrophulariifolia*  
Purple giant hyssop  
July-Sept.



*Impatiens capensis*  
Spotted touch-me-not  
July-Sept.



*Gentiana clausa*  
Closed gentian  
July-Sept.



*Scutellaria galericulata*  
Hooded skullcap  
July-Sept.



*Scutellaria laterifolia*  
Mad dog skullcap  
July-Sept.



*Cirsium discolor*  
Field thistle  
Aug.-Sept.



*Physostegia virginiana*  
Obedient plant  
Aug.-Sept.



*Lespedeza capitata*  
Round-headed bush clover  
Aug.-Sept.

**Other food plants:** American holly, aster, black willow, common milkweed, devil's beggartick, goldenrod, honeysuckle, Joe-pye weed, rose mallow, thistle (yellow, swamp, pasture), tulip tree (yellow poplar).

**Habitat preferences:** Grassland cover is important for *B. fervidus* which frequently nests aboveground in such habitats. It has also been found in hayfields, cultivated cropland, sandy areas, powerline ROW, a limestone quarry, town parks, and the grounds of an urban seaside university in CT.



For more information, please visit us at <https://web.uri.edu/beelab>  
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