



Scottish Natural Heritage  
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

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## Lots of relatives!

There are around 20,000 different types of bee in the world – and the biggest group of bees are the solitary bees. Over 90% of the world's bees are solitary. They can be superb pollinators. In America the alfalfa solitary bee is reared commercially to be used to pollinate this plant.



## Bringing up baby

Solitary bees do not live in a hive or a nest with other bees. They don't stay with their growing young either. Instead they leave a supply of food for the emerging young bees to feed on.

## Where's your pollen?

Honeybees and bumblebees collect pollen and store it wet on their hind legs in pollen baskets. Solitary bees collect their pollen dry and hold it in a brush of hairs either on their back legs or on their tummy (called a Scopa).

## Beach house

The Gold-fringed Mason bee lives on the beach but has an unusual home. It only uses empty snail shells for its house.

## Laugh out loud

What is a bee's favourite tv channel?

*The Beebe C*

## So many bees

In Britain we have around 270 species of bee, just under 250 of them are what we call solitary bees.

## Nesting habits

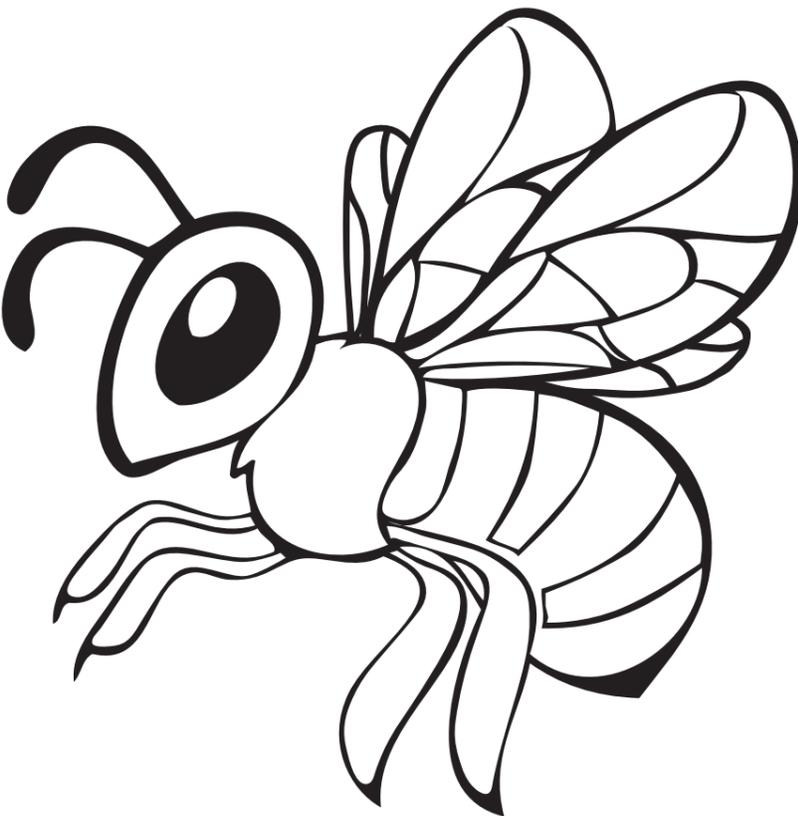
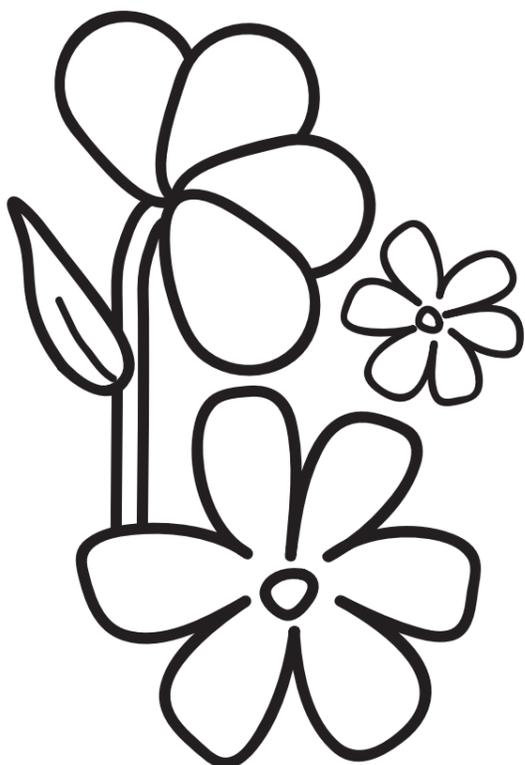
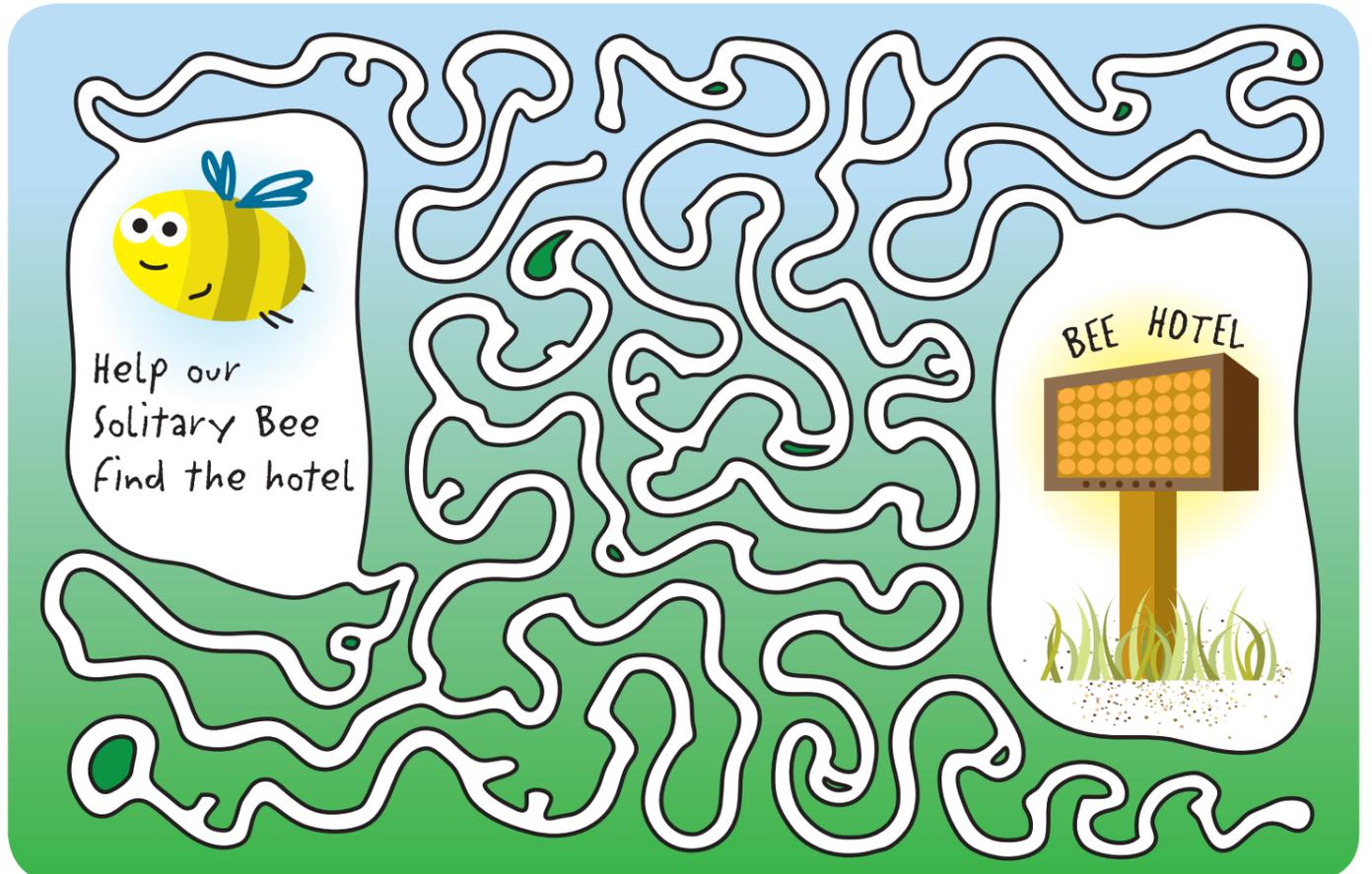
Some solitary bees burrow into bare soil to make their nest. They often like banks (not the kind with money in them!) which face south and are warmed up in the sun. If you can provide a south-facing bare earth patch they might just make their home near you.

Because there are over 200 kinds of solitary bee in the UK they have all sorts of nesting habits. Some bees like holes in trees or wooden posts. Others will lay their eggs in a bee hotel (like the one below).



## Did you know?

A single red mason bee is reckoned to be equal to 120 worker honeybees in the pollination it provides.



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# Solitary bees