

Lone flower bumblebees

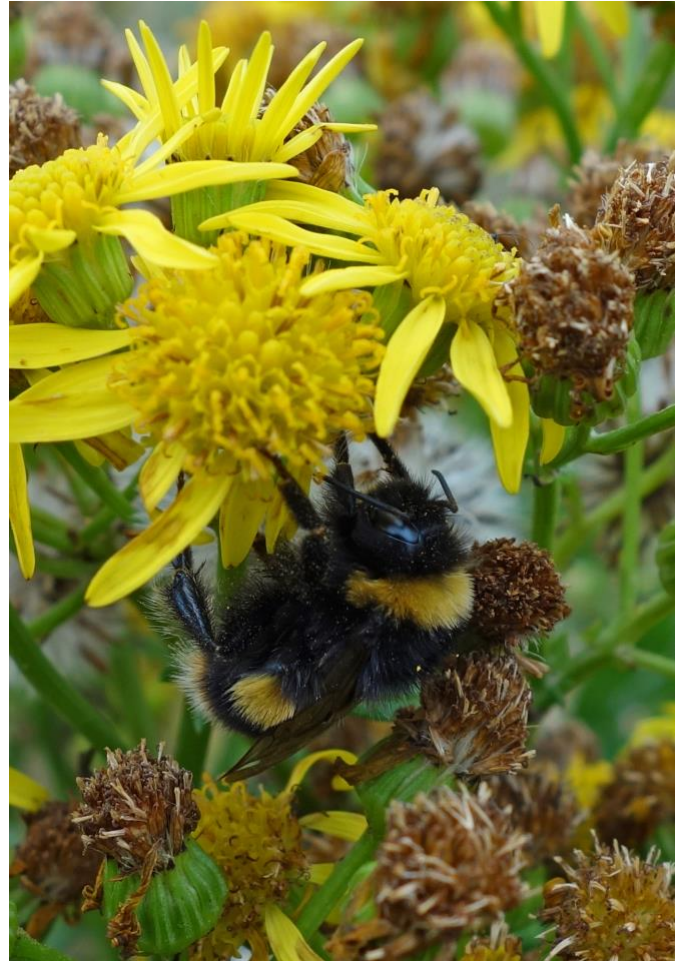
Wendy Carter

On the first day of our holiday in Northumberland in October 2019 we found a male Buff-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus terrestris* on a ragwort plant. It was the only plant still in flower for quite a distance.

During the following two weeks there was a lot of rain, some high winds, the occasional (warm) sunshine and pretty much everything in between. We walked past the ragwort regularly and the bee was always there. I'd occasionally hold my hand around it to give it a few moments respite from the wind blowing off the North Sea - he often responded by moving to a different flower head for food. On the final day of our two week holiday, we made one final check and, sure enough, the bee was still there. I was impressed with just how hardy this individual was but what really stood out was how incredibly important the plant was.

Similarly one lone flowering Viper's Bugloss plant about a mile away had three Moss Carder Bees *Bombus muscorum* on it (03).

These observations highlight the importance of ensuring we have nectar-rich plants in our gardens that flower for as many months of the year as possible, supplementing and replacing those that have been lost in the wider landscape. This is crucial if we are to help our pollinators to recover and thrive.



02. One isolated ragwort used by a male *Bombus terrestris* for several days in October. Northumberland. Wendy Carter



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03. Solitary flowering Viper's Bugloss with Moss Carder Bees *Bombus muscorum* October 2019. Northumberland. Wendy Carter.

Images

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Bombus muscorum October 2019. Northumberland. Wendy Carter.