



INSECT FACTS

Pollinators in Steenbok



Digger bees

Female adult digger bees live underground, where they build a nest about 15 cm. Deep within the nest, they prepare a chamber with plenty of pollen and nectar to sustain the larvae.

Male digger bees don't help with this project. Instead, their job is to tunnel to the surface of the soil before the females emerge in spring. The bees spend their time flying around, waiting to create the next generation of digger bees.

You may notice digger bees in areas where the grass is sparse, such as shady or dry spots. Digger bees are solitary and each bee has its own special entry to its private chamber. These bees pollinate plants and prey on harmful insects.



Hoverflies

These little creatures are also called Flower Flies or Sweet Bees, and as their other common names suggest they are often seen hovering around flowers and feeding on nectar. Some of these flies mimic the appearance of bees, however they do not sting or bite.

Adult hoverflies feed on flower nectar and help pollinate some crops, but it is the larvae that are important predators in the garden. The nearly invisible slug-like larvae scour the undersides of plant leaves for aphids, and eat them as their main food source.



Honey bees

Bees have five eyes (two compound eyes and three single lens eyes) and a worker bee's main eyes have nearly 7 000 lenses.

An electrostatic charge on the bee's hairs attracts pollen and the leg brushes then scrape the pollen from front to back, where it collects in the pollen basket – a flat and wide area on the rear pair of legs; the proboscis (long tongue) is an airtight, straw-like tube that sucks up nectar.



Carpenter bees

The species is at home in various habitat types, from dry savannah to moist coastal settings. The territorial males patrol small areas around particular flowers or plants.

The females are solitary nesters in Aloe or tree branches or timber. The nests are partitioned into various cells, separated by walls of glued wood residue. A wide variety of plants are used as sources of nectar and pollen.