

## southern plains bumble bee *Bombus fraternus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Insecta

Order: Hymenoptera

Family: Apidae

ILLINOIS STATUS rare, native

### FEATURES

Color descriptions refer to “hair.” Queens and workers have a yellow thorax, and about the front half of the abdomen is yellow, too. There is a black band between the wing bases. The tail is black. Hairs are very short. Males of this species are similar in coloration to the females but may show more yellow on the head.

### BEHAVIORS

These are short-tongued bees. Asters (*Symphyotrichum* spp.), bee balms (*Monarda* spp.), sumacs (*Rhus* spp.) and thistles (*Cirsium* spp.) are among the many plant species that they visit. Queens are active from April through October. Workers are active from April through September. Males are active in August. These bees are important pollinators of the flowers that they visit to collect nectar and pollen. Bumble bees are eusocial insects. Their life cycle includes egg, larva, pupa and adult stages. Only the fertilized queen overwinters from a colony. In the spring, she selects a nest site and constructs the nest, which is lined with plant material. The first brood raised consists of all workers (females). The workers do all the jobs of the hive except egg-laying. Late in the year both males and queens are produced. Males mate with queens in the fall.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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