



BWARS

Information Sheet

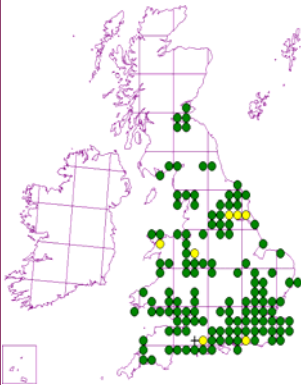
Fork Tailed Flower Bee (*Anthophora furcata*)

Africa Gómez

- * **A widespread species in the UK**
- * **Attracted to flowers in the Deadnettle family**
- * **Excavate their nest burrows in dead wood**
- * **Do YOU have this species in your garden?**

Featuring:

- Background information
- Distribution in UK
- Life cycle
- Habitat and nesting



A distribution map of *Anthophora furcata*

Background and Distribution

A medium-sized (10-14mm), hairy solitary bee, often found in gardens, although never common. It has a long tongue, almost as long as the body length when extended, and brown eyes. The male is dark, with chestnut-brown hair when fresh and a characteristic yellow face with little hair. Females are all brown, with a fringe of reddish hairs at the tip of the abdomen, and pollen collecting hairs on her hind legs. As with other *Anthophora*, they have a quick, darting flight, which is characterised by a shrill buzz.

There is a single generation each year that flies mainly in June and July; the males emerge before the females.

It is a widely distributed species in the UK, occurring as far north as south west Scotland. It is a Eurasian species, and a closely related species occurs in North America.



A female *Anthophora furcata* at Hedge Woundwort flowers

Habitat and Nesting

It occurs in a wide range of habitats including woodland, gardens, fenland, moors and heaths, grassland and on the coast.

Nests are dug in dead wood (trees, fence posts, driftwood on the coast) and cells are lined with compacted wood dust.

The females collect pollen from a number of plant species, although they are specialists on the Mint family which have tubular or complex flowers with restricted access to pollen and nectar. It is one of a small group of bees with morphological adaptations to collect pollen from such flowers, this consisting on specialised facial hairs with which it brushes the pollen from flower anthers while buzzing her wings, before moving the pollen it to her pollen baskets. In Britain it is commonly seen on Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*), Lambs Ears (*Stachys byzantina*), and nectaring on Foxgloves.



A male *A. furcata* at flowers of Lambs Ear



A male *Anthophora furcata* showing the yellow facial markings



A female *A. furcata* excavating a nest burrow in dead wood



A female *Anthophora* with the beginnings of a pollen load on the hind legs

Hymettus Ltd is the premier source of advice on the conservation of bees, wasps and ants within Great Britain and Ireland.

<http://hymettus.org.uk/>
Registered Charity No. 1124636

BWARS, The Bees Wasps & Ants Recording Society is the national recording scheme which provides the only source of fully validated data on the UK bee, wasp & ant fauna.

<http://www.bwars.com/>

For further information and submission of records:

contact: [spmr\[at\]msn.com](mailto:spmr[at]msn.com)

Photos: B. Jacobi, L. Hislop