

American Bumble Bee

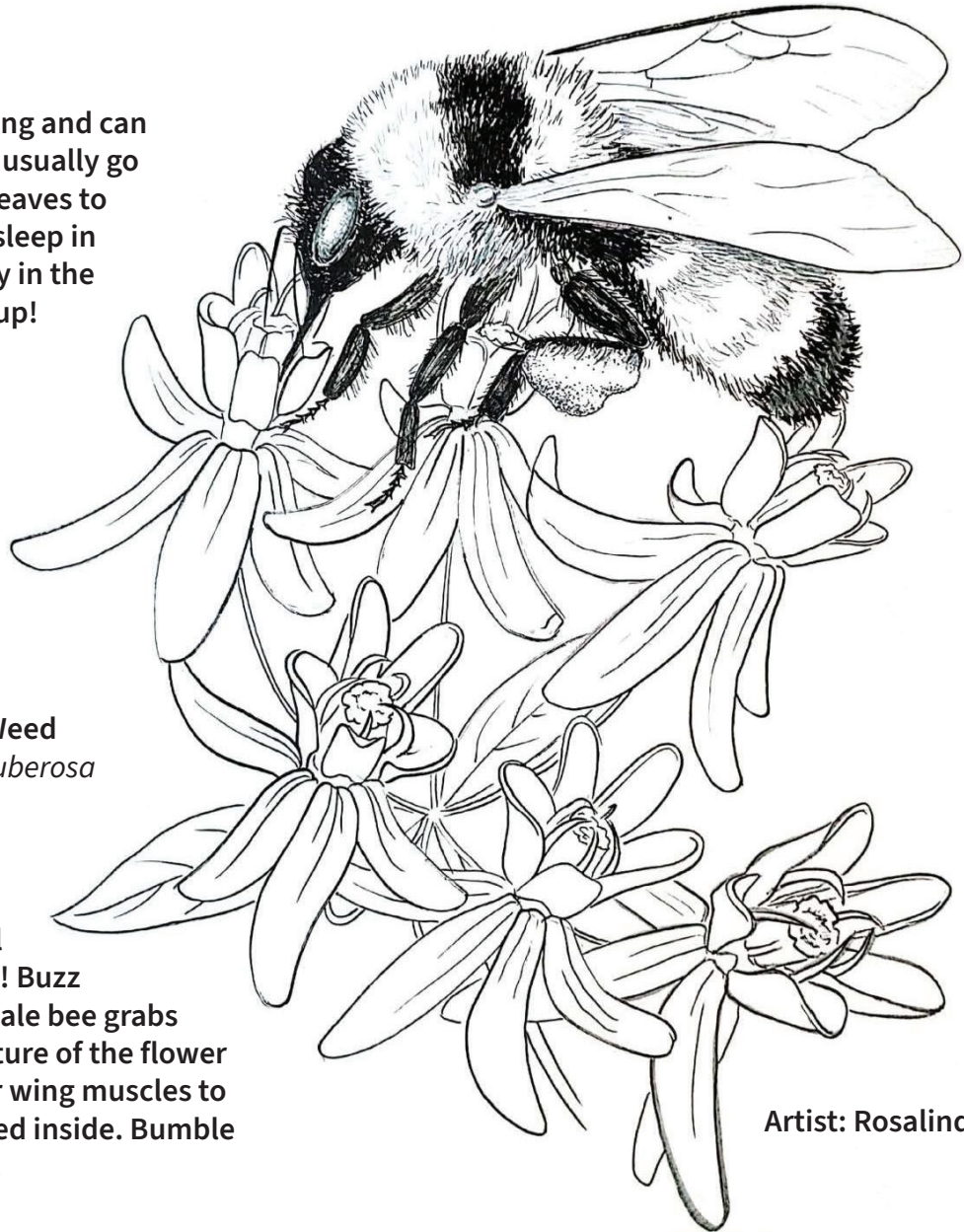
(*Bombus pensylvanicus*)

Bumble bees are important pollinators. Female bees collect pollen from flowers to feed their young. Pollen has more protein than a steak per ounce! But how do they carry it to the nest? That same fuzzy hair that keeps them warm also picks up pollen. Female bumble bees frequently comb the pollen out of their hair with special brushes on their legs. Then they pack the pollen into “pollen baskets” built into their hind legs.

Bumble bees work hard flying and can get very tired. Female bees usually go to their nest under logs or leaves to sleep, but male bees often sleep in flowers. Look for them early in the morning before they wake up! They are SO-O-O SLEEPY!

Butterfly Weed
Asclepius tuberosa

Bumble bees have a special skill called buzz pollination! Buzz pollination is when the female bee grabs the pollen-producing structure of the flower in her jaws and vibrates her wing muscles to release pollen that is trapped inside. Bumble bees are strong pollinators!



Artist: Rosalind Reilly

To learn more about bumble bees go to xerces.org/bumble-bees.