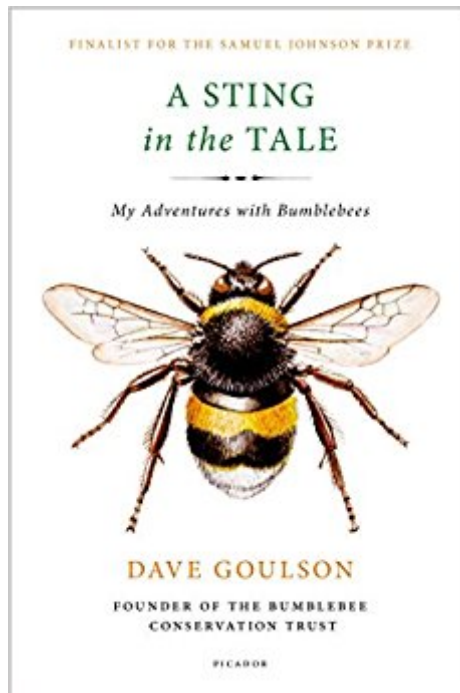




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# A Sting In The Tale: My Adventures With Bumblebees



## Synopsis

A FACINATING TRAVEL MEMOIR THAT WILL ALTER THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT THE BUMBLEBEE

Dave Goulson became obsessed with wildlife as a small boy growing up in rural Shropshire, starting with an increasingly exotic menagerie of pets. When his interest turned to the anatomical, there were even some ill-fated experiments with taxidermy. But bumblebees are where Goulson's true passion lies. His passionate quest to reintroduce the bumblebee to its native land is one of the highlights of a book that includes exclusive research into these mysterious creatures, history's relationship with the bumblebee, and advice on how to protect the bumblebee for future generations. One of the United Kingdom's most respected conservationists and the founder of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Goulson combines light-hearted tales of a child's growing passion for nature with a deep insight into the crucial importance of the bumblebee. He details the minutiae of life in the nest, sharing fascinating research into the effects intensive farming has had on our bee population and the potential dangers if we are to continue down this path.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although the disturbing recent spread of bee colony collapse disorder has prompted media outlets to take a closer look at these humble, honey-gathering insects, for Goulson, the study of bees has been a lifelong passion. As he recounts in this absorbing and informative hybrid between guidebook and memoir, Goulson fell in love with the buzzing creatures as a young nature buff growing up in rural Shropshire, England. However, one variety of bee, the short-haired bumblebee, which Goulson

observed as a boy, is now gone, a fact that spurred him to found the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and lead efforts to bring this particular species back to the UK from New Zealand. In between describing the ordeal that ensued when Goulson and a fellow entomologist traveled to New Zealand to solve the puzzle of shipping bumblebee queens back to England, the author gives readers a solid grounding in bee gestation, anatomy, culture, and the many environmental threats bees are currently facing. An outstanding piece of nature writing that also celebrates one of humankind's most cherished insects. --Carl Hays --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• A Sting in the Tale is both a whodunit as well as a revealing study of a bug on whom we depend a great deal. • Seattle Times • A Sting in the Tale melts memoir and conservation issues into a sweet pot, moving from subject to subject very much in the manner of a foraging bee seeking flowers . . . The book is warm and delightful: I frequently found myself wanting to put it down to go bird and bee-watching, to find for myself the species [Goulson] discusses. • NPR • [Goulson's] enthusiasm shines through as he tells of his attempt to bring the short-haired bumblebee back to Britain, its native land . . . Goulson transforms what could be dry material with stinging wit. • New York Post • Fascinating and inspiring. Dave Goulson is a genial raconteur, with much to teach us about the biology and conservation of our insect cousins. • D. G. Haskell, author of Pulitzer Prize Finalist The Forest Unseen • Goulson's personal touch is stamped throughout...peppered with fascinating observations, a sense of good cheer, and Goulson's undeniable passion for an oft-uncelebrated subject, here presented for appreciation by the casual armchair naturalist. • Publishers Weekly • What you never knew about bumblebees, from a man who is both passionate and knowledgeable....[An] impressive debut....A delightful book by an author filled with enthusiasm for the natural world and in possession of just the right touch for sharing it with others. • Kirkus Reviews (starred) • Absorbing and informative...An outstanding piece of nature writing that also celebrates one of mankind's most cherished insects. • Booklist • Goulson's adventures with bumblebees tells the well-written story of the making of a naturalist, and also enchantingly informs us not only about bees but also about ecosystems and conservation. • Bernd Heinrich, Author of Bumblebee Economics and Mind of the Raven • [Goulson's] book is not only enormously informative, but also hugely entertaining: its light touch and constant humour make cutting-edge research a pleasure to read about. For anyone interested in the natural world, this is essential reading. • The Independent (London) • Goulson combines enthusiasm with academic authority, addressing the amateur beekeeper and professional apiarist in well-judged

proportion.â • â •The Times (London)â œGoulson has plenty of wondrous biological stories to tell, as well as the tale of his own struggle to return the short-haired bumblebee to Britain.â • â •The Guardian (London)

A Sting in the Tale would frustrate Dragnet's Sergeant Joe Friday. Author Dave Goulson recounts more than "just the facts" about bumble bees in his engaging and highly informative book. He confesses to much formative pet-keeping and nature-collecting during his youth. He conveys the reader through revealing field studies in England, Scotland, New Zealand, and Tasmania. He introduces colorful doctoral students who collaborate with him on interesting experiments. Throughout, Goulson accessibly explains fascinating aspects of the biology and conservation of bumble bees. Dr. Goulson, a scientist and professor who has taught at universities in England and Scotland, continues a century-long British tradition of affection for bumble bees and leadership in research about them. In his first book, the scientific treatise *Bumblebees: Behaviour, Ecology, and Conservation*, Goulson documents the current worldwide body of research. With *A Sting in the Tale*, he appeals to non-scientists to understand and appreciate his favorite animal. Goulson devotes chapters to especially notable bumble bee characteristics. In "The Bumblebee Year" chapter, plant enthusiasts will see parallels between bumble bee colonies and annual plants. Analogous to a seed, a mated queen overwinters alone in loose soil or leaf litter. In the spring, she emerges, finds a nest site, lays a first batch of eggs, and provides pollen and nectar to the larvae, all of which develop into female workers. The workers take over foraging and nest duties, while the queen lays more eggs. When the worker population becomes sufficiently large, the colony produces new queens and males. After a new queen mates with a male, usually from another colony, and builds up fat reserves, she finds a place to overwinter alone, repeating the cycle. The old queen, workers, and males all die. In contrast, analogous to perennial plants, honey bee colonies use their sizable honey stores to sustain their queen and thousands of workers throughout the winter. In "The Hot-Blooded Bumblebee" chapter, Goulson summarizes the research of American Bernd Heinrich, author of *Bumble Bee Economics*, into endothermy. A bumble bee's thorax temperature must be at least 86 degrees Fahrenheit for the bumble bee to fly. Bumble bees raise their internal temperature by shivering their flight muscles. In the "Ketchup and Turkish Immigrants" chapter, we learn that bumble bees can "buzz pollinate", vibrating as they grasp a flower, unleashing a shower of pollen. This ability makes bumble bees exceptionally effective pollinators of nightshades, like tomatoes. Greenhouse growers now employ commercially-reared bumble bee colonies. But shipping colonies spreads disease and introduces species outside of their native ranges. Many researchers believe

that commercially-reared colonies transported to the U.S. in the 1990's spread exotic diseases to wild populations, causing dramatic declines in once common U.S. species like the Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis*). In 2006, Dr. Goulson founded the Bumblebee Conservation Trust in Great Britain to promote preservation and restoration of suitable habitat as well as celebration of this amazing animal. The Xerces Society supports similar goals in the U.S. for all invertebrates. While British fauna and flora predominate Goulson's account, the biology and substance apply to North America. *A Sting in the Tale* offers a stirring chance to listen to one of the world's leading authorities candidly describe his life's work and essentials of what we know about this wonderful creature. I heartily recommend it.

I'm a dedicated gardener, and I bought this book, because I've seen many a bumblebee in my gardens and wanted to know more about them. The author is a Brit and is an academic whose life and career have been devoted to studying bumblebees in Great Britain and all over the world. I did learn many things about bumblebees that I didn't know, and the book has given me some ideas of things I can do in my garden to perhaps attract more and help them in their short lives. The book doesn't just describe and explain bumblebees. It also has chapters with bumblebee-related topics. For example, the author tells us about his purchase of a farm in France, where he rehabs the house and slowly rehabs the land so it will be a better bumblebee habitat. The author started a bumblebee conservation society in Great Britain, and there is a chapter devoted to that tale. The book is easy to read, and the author writes well. There is, of course, some bumblebee-related science, but it is not intimidating and it is easily understandable. I liked it a lot.

The book took a while to arrive - coming from overseas- as one might expect. Was packed very well, almost too well. No damage at all what so ever to the book in shipping. I love the book. Very well written and informative! Some of his stories are very funny, they caught me off guard! Am reading it now and actually taking notes and underlining in the book. I plan on including this book as a resource to teach others about our native bees. Well worth the wait. Terrific author!! Thank-you!!

This is a quite superb book. Written by a scientist who has that rare ability not only to impart knowledge about an at times complex subject, but also to do it in an interesting and often very amusing manner. A great fan of bumblebees myself, I learned a great deal more about them, particularly those in Britain and the serious reduction in species numbers in both Britain and the United States. As a New Zealander I found the account of Goulson's sojourn in New Zealand

looking for short haired bumble bees (and sampling the country's pies) quite priceless. The only criticism I have is that Goulson wrote that foxes had been introduced to New Zealand. I'm pleased to say that despite introducing a plethora of species including (but by no means restricted to) pigs, goats, deer, rabbits, stoats, weasels and ferrets, foxes by some happy mischance were not included. Never mind, with all the alien species we are now host to, what's a missing fox or two between friends? If you are interested in insects in general and Bumble Bees in particular, get a copy of this book. It will hopefully act a spur for you to do what you can to help the survival of these fascinating little beasts and you'll get a good laugh into the bargain. We need all the bumble bees we can get and authors as talented as Goulson to write about them.

An absolutely fantastic read, easy, informative and lots of fun - want to discover more and more about the World of Bees. It was a page-turner as much as any novel. Goulson has great ability to share technical knowledge with the less-informed in a way that is interesting, amusing and totally unpatronising. Great book!

Great book. I have gifted to so many people. These little workers are so overlooked and yet so important for agriculture and our planet. Scientific, yet very readable

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