

# BUMBLEBEE MIMIC

(*Laphria flavicollis*)

# Bug of the Month



**At first glance, you may believe this is a bumblebee.** However, its short straight antennae, long-bearded face, and tapering body give clues to its true identity: a robber fly. Robber flies in the genus *Laphria* are common mimics of bumblebees. They are usually quite hairy with black and yellow bodies. The bumblebee mimic pictured here, *Laphria*

*flavicollis*, is commonly found across the eastern United States. They breed in decaying logs in deciduous forests, and as adults, are often seen resting on sunlit vegetation.

Robber flies are predatory insects that hunt by perching and waiting for insects to pass by. They prey upon insects like other robber flies, bees, wasps,

and beetles. Once they have collected their prey, they return to their perch and inject the insect with a digestive enzyme that dissolves its internal tissues. The robber fly then sucks the fluid out, and it is ready to hunt again.

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