

SUPPORT A SPECIES:

---

# Harmless Hoverflies



Photo: Episyrphus Balteatus



Loughborough  
University

# HARMLESS HOVERFLIES

---

Hoverflies are excellent examples of Batesian mimicry (named after H W Bates who first described it in 1862). They generally mimic bees and wasps – insects that sting and also taste unpleasant, so are avoided by predators.

---

## Hoverfly Facts

- Despite looking like bees and wasps, hoverflies have no sting and are harmless to humans.
- They can be differentiated from bees and wasps by their single pair of wings (bees and wasps have 2 pairs) and their flight pattern; they hover for short periods of time.
- Hoverflies are welcomed in gardens as they eat aphids, pests and are pollinators.

## Threats to Hoverflies

- Like most insects, hoverflies are threatened by habitat loss to agriculture and urbanisation.

## How You Can Help

- Hoverflies are attracted to tiny flowers due to their small mouths and especially flowers that are orange or bright yellow such as Marigolds.
- Hoverflies will also help your garden by laying eggs; their larvae hatch and aphids on plants.

## Spotting Hoverflies

Hoverflies can be found in most habitats, including gardens.

They are often found on flowers in July and August.

