

## ENTOMOLOGY

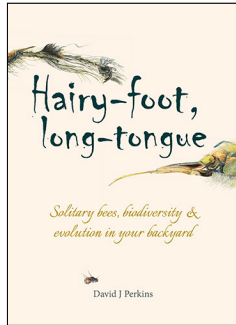
**Hairy-foot, Long-tongue: Solitary Bees, Biodiversity & Evolution in Your Backyard**

By David J. Perkins. 2024. Whittles Publishing. 200 pages, 31.95 CAD, Paper.

The title of this book does nothing to grab the appropriate reader's attention; could it be about ogres in the fantasy genre, or perhaps it alludes to something more in the realm of horror? Thankfully, the subtitle (which is not always included in online search results when it's needed) does clear it up. The title reflects the physical qualities of the central character in this book, *Anthophora plumipes*, or Hairy-footed Flower Bee (HFFB), which has a widespread distribution across Europe. Throughout this book, many other species of solitary bees are mentioned, often in the context of HFFB.

The illustrations in the book include photographs, diagrams, and drawings. Many of these illustrations were done by the author. The photographs are adequate; sometimes they're a bit dark or fuzzy, sometimes they're great. The diagrams are well-drawn, clear, and easy to interpret. However, the drawings are stunning, and they alone make it worth picking up a copy of the book. Considerable time with a microscope must have been invested to translate the colours and impressive detail onto these pages! The illustrations included that are not by the author are credited, often with considerable notation, in 30 pages toward the back of the book.

Page 1 is on the lefthand side. I don't believe I've ever seen that before. There is a publisher's note explaining the anomaly: "This highly illustrated book utilises double paged spreads to present images and



text. To enable the reader to get the most from this style, we have strayed from convention and page 1 appears as the first left-handed page" (p. viii). I have read this over and over and don't get it ... how could the page number (which I rarely look at anyway) alter my appreciation of the images and text?

The bulk of the book comprises short segments (they're not delineated as chapters, *per se*) of discrete topics. As expected, there are sections on anatomy, feeding, nesting, and other classic topics. Because the book's author is a city dweller, there are many references to urban bee diversity and habitats. There are segments with multiple entries but the writing typically returns to the HFFB. Parasitism, kleptoparasitism, and parasitoidism on these bees are fascinating topics that are perhaps too briefly covered.

There are a few errors, unexpected in a book of such otherwise high quality. On the last paragraph of page 87: "Megachilidae is the only other genus of bees ..."; however, Megachilidae is a family of bees. At the top of page 114: "Males hatch from puparia ..."; eggs hatch, adults eclose from puparia. There are some others, but these suffice to illustrate the point.

An eight-page glossary towards the end of the book is thorough and appreciated.

Overall, this is a great book that is sure to inspire readers to be more observant of these lesser-known bees and perhaps entice them to create gardens or build nesting structures for the bees' benefit.

RANDY LAUFF  
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