



The Salty Dog



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Solitary Bees

Alkali Bees

Genus: *Nomia*
(pronounced NO-mi-a)



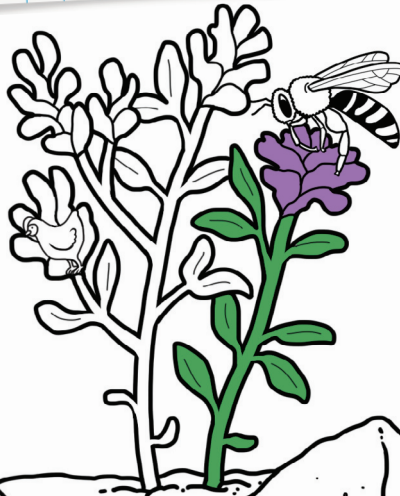
Alkali Bee
12 to 13 mm in length



Photo courtesy of Washington Native Bee Society



Alkali bees like to visit flowers in the legume family, like alfalfa, milk vetch and lupine.



Alfalfa

About 70% of bee species nest in the ground, usually a few inches deep, but sometimes a foot or more!

The alkali bees of the Pacific Northwest region (Oregon, Washington, Idaho) are the only ground-nesting bees in the world managed by farmers.

Alkali bee on alfalfa



Find the hidden pictures!



Hen



Egg



Shovel

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Field Notes:

Alkali bees, like leafcutter bees, pollinate alfalfa flowers to make alfalfa seed. From the seed, farmers grow hay to feed many different types of animals. Even chickens like alfalfa hay! Alkali bees nest in the ground and are very picky; in the wild they love salty, moist and crumbly soil. Some farmers have figured out how to create these same conditions in the soil on their farms. At these sites, thousands of females build nests side-by-side, packing their nests with alfalfa pollen. After the females lay an egg, the hungry alkali bee larvae consume the pollen and complete their development underground.

What specific physical trait(s) make alkali bees unique?



A trait of this bee is that it makes its nest in the ground.
Name a synonym and antonym for ground: