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Solitary Bees Cuckoo Bees

Genus: *Nomada*
(pronounced no-MA-da)



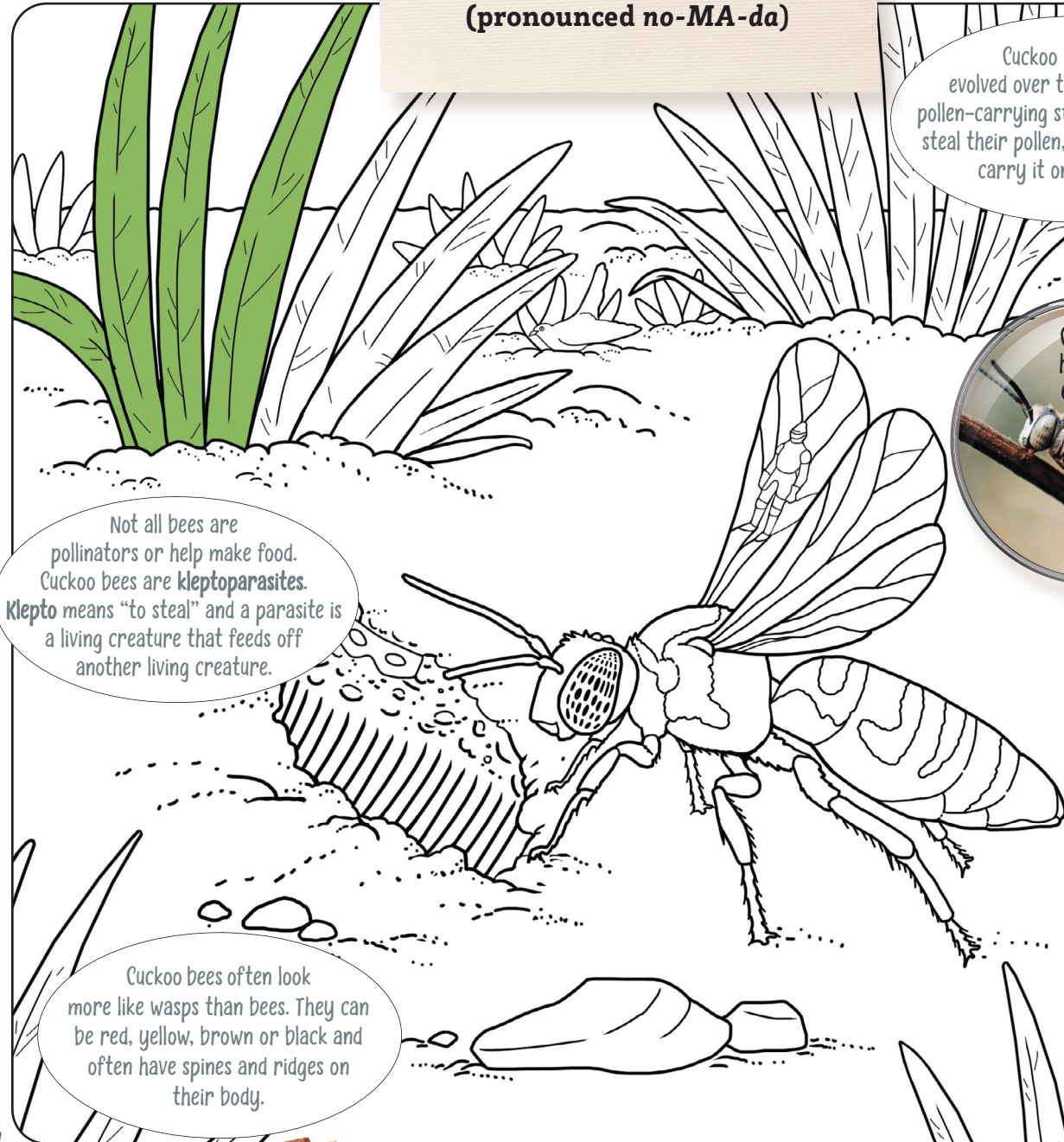
Cuckoo Bee
8 to 10 mm in length



Cuckoo bees have evolved over time without any pollen-carrying structure. Since they steal their pollen, they don't need to carry it on their body.



Photo by Hilary Kearney



Not all bees are pollinators or help make food. Cuckoo bees are **kleptoparasites**. **Klepto** means "to steal" and a parasite is a living creature that feeds off another living creature.

Cuckoo bees often look more like wasps than bees. They can be red, yellow, brown or black and often have spines and ridges on their body.

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Armor



Thief Mask



Cuckoo Bird

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Cuckoo bees don't forage for pollen. They have found a way to steal it. When a *Nomada* female **reproduces** (has babies), she looks for a nest that is being built

by a specific species of host bee. Once she finds a nest, she waits for the female bee who made it to go forage. Then she sneaks inside and quickly lays her own eggs, right next to some of the other bee's eggs. Each of her eggs will hatch into a larva (the early stage of a bee that looks like a caterpillar), destroy the offspring of the other female and eat pollen left by the female who made the nest. Cuckoo bees got their name from cuckoo birds, which lay their eggs in other birds' nests.

✿ If you could add a special trait to the cuckoo bee, what would it be? How would it help it survive or thrive?



A trait of these bees is that they are **sneaky**. Name a synonym and antonym for sneaky: