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MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS WITH HIGH DIAGNOSTIC VALUE  
FOR DISCRIMINATING THE SUBGENERA OF BUMBLEBEES  
(APIDAE BOMBINI)

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The results of the studies carried out by the *Sezione di Apicoltura* of *Istituto Sperimentale per la Zoologia Agraria* about taxonomy, distribution and morphology of *Bombus* Latreille *s.l.* and *Psithyrus* Lepeletier *s.l.* are reported. The morphological analysis is up to now the best way for a correct classification of species. The methods adopted and the elements useful for discriminating *Bombus* subgenera present in Italy are discussed. The characters of higher diagnostic value were used to compile a dichotomic key. All the results obtained through these researches are reported in the website [www.bombus.it](http://www.bombus.it) dedicated to the identification of bumblebees.

KEY WORDS: *Bombus*, morphological characters, dichotomic keys.