

# Queen Bumblebee

1:12th Scale  
Tutorial



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## Introduction

This tutorial is based on the queen buff tailed bumblebee, and comes in 3 parts. The method of making them is straight forward; Starting first with the head, the basic body is built in layers on the tip of a coconut fibre using tacky glue and flocking (fabric that is cut into a sawdust like consistency), which gives the bumblebee a fluffy appearance.

For this tutorial I have used 'Funstamps Fun Flock', although other brands such as 'Sweet Dixie' work just as well. Using a Google search of the name of the materials needed online should bring up a list of suppliers to help you to find them.

To protect your eyes from straining choose a non patterned and uncluttered background to work over, and keep work surfaces free from dust, glitter or any other little particles as they may ruin your bumblebee if they manage to get stuck on to it. Because the project is so small, glue and flock are used in miniscule amounts and a ruler is used to measure the length of the bumblebee as you are working on it, although it is probably best to not worry about accuracy for your first attempt, and the bees can be made larger for practice if you prefer.

Although the whole process sounds fiddly, this is meant to be a fun tutorial! Work at your own pace and takes regular breaks when necessary.

## List of tools and materials needed:

Face mask: **To be worn when working with flocking and solvents. Also ensure you have good ventilation where you are working.**

Flocking fibre in Yellow, black and white

Tacky glue

Superglue gel

Clean plastic supermarket produce bag or plastic food bag made from translucent high density polythene. The plastic should be easy enough to stretch out of shape.

Sharp scissors

Tweezers

A rounded point size 2/0 artist brush. I used an old Handover Series 299 2/0 which was cut down to two bristles thick

Fine strand of coconut fibre approx 10 cm long

Black acrylic paint in any brand (I used crafters acrylic)

Black fabric paint (Setacolor in Black ink was used for this tutorial)

Plain paper or chopping board as a work surface

Magnifying glass (optional)

A ruler with metric measurements

Three small clean containers for holding a small amount of flocking. Containers made from cardboard or paper aren't suitable.

**Before you begin:** *Read through the tutorial to familiarise yourself with the steps. If necessary, paint the coconut strand to match the colour of the flower or other chosen background your bumble bee will be resting on and leave it to dry.*



1. Coconut fibre
2. Flocking (*Stamps4u.co.uk*)
3. Acrylic paint (*www.theworks.co.uk*)
4. Setacolour fabric paint in Ink Black (*www.hobbycraft.co.uk*)
5. Aleene's Tacky glue
6. Loctite Superglue gel
7. Surgical pointed tip tweezers
8. 0/2 size pointed tip brush
9. Cocktail stick
10. Embroidery scissors



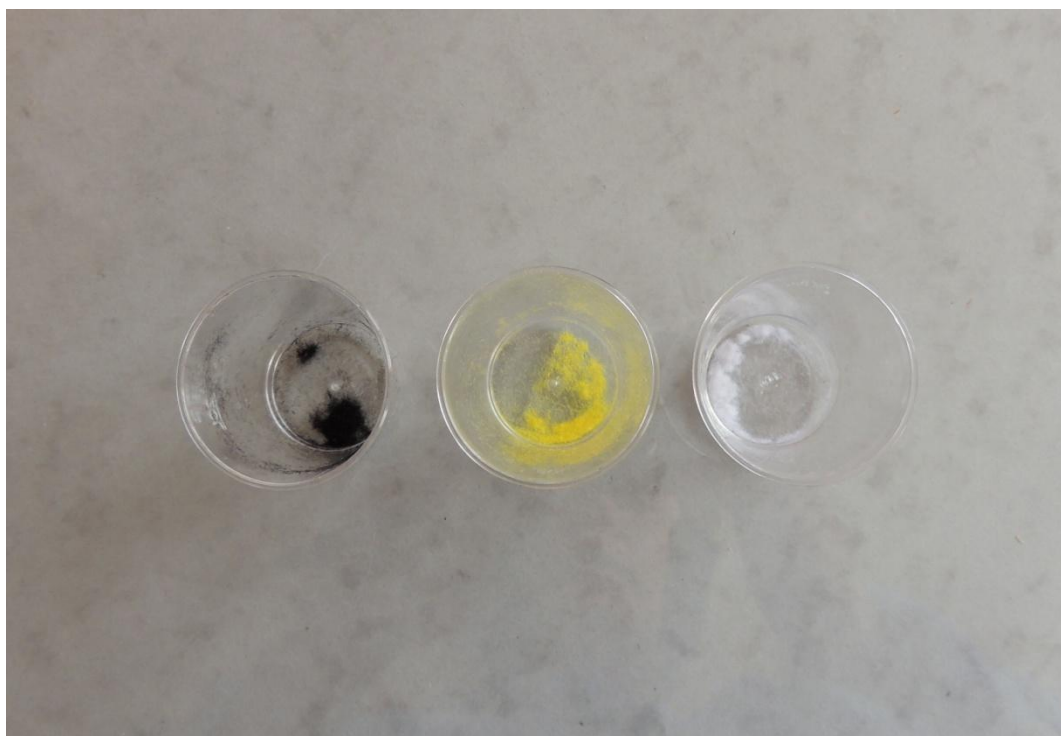
*Food produce bag*

## Part I- Making the Body

Steps 1- 7

**1:12 Scale queen bumblebee measurements:** 1.6mm – 2.5mm in length

**1.** Put a pinch of flocking into each container using tweezers. I'm using plastic disposable shot containers but any small plastic container can be used.

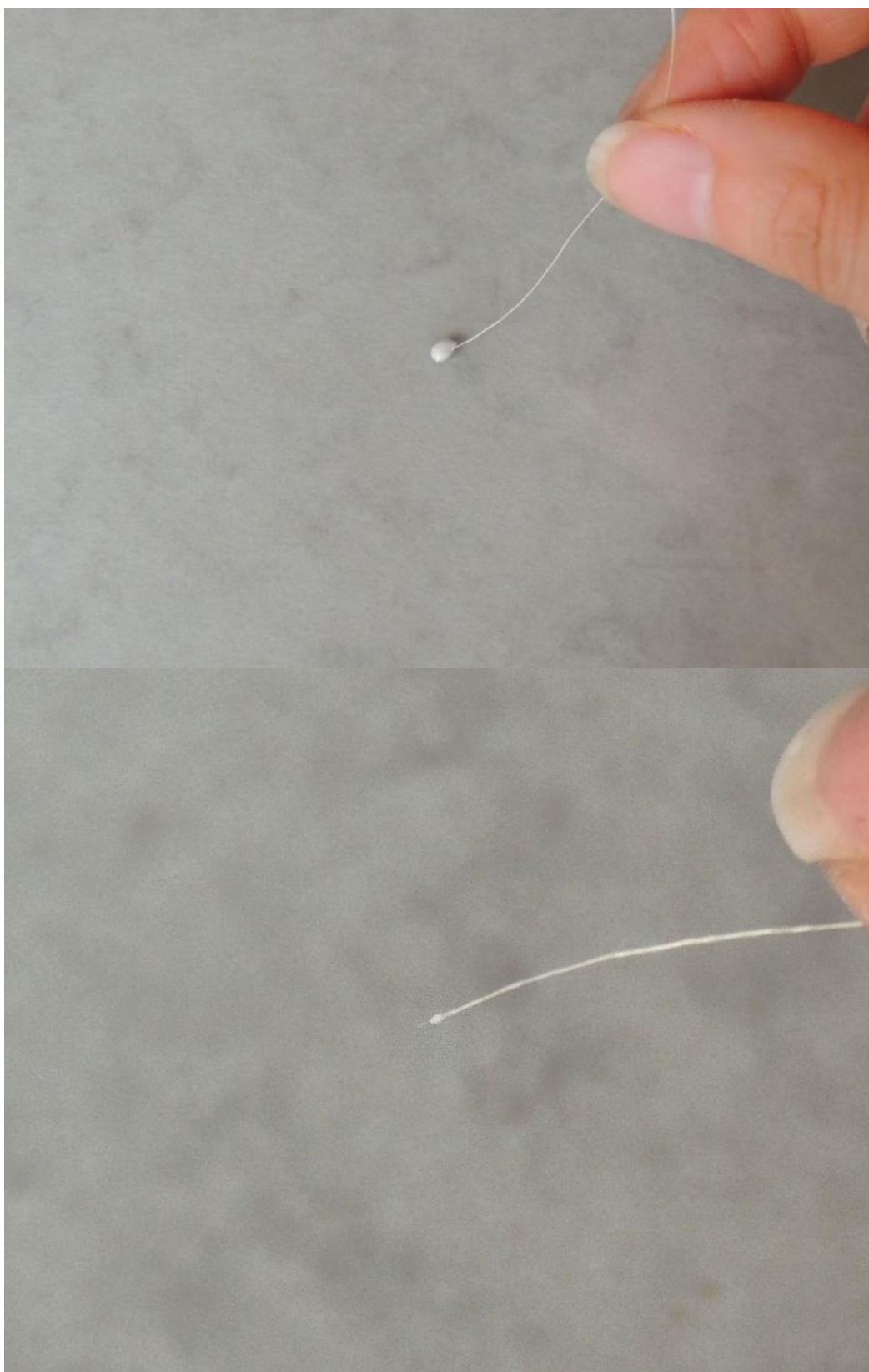




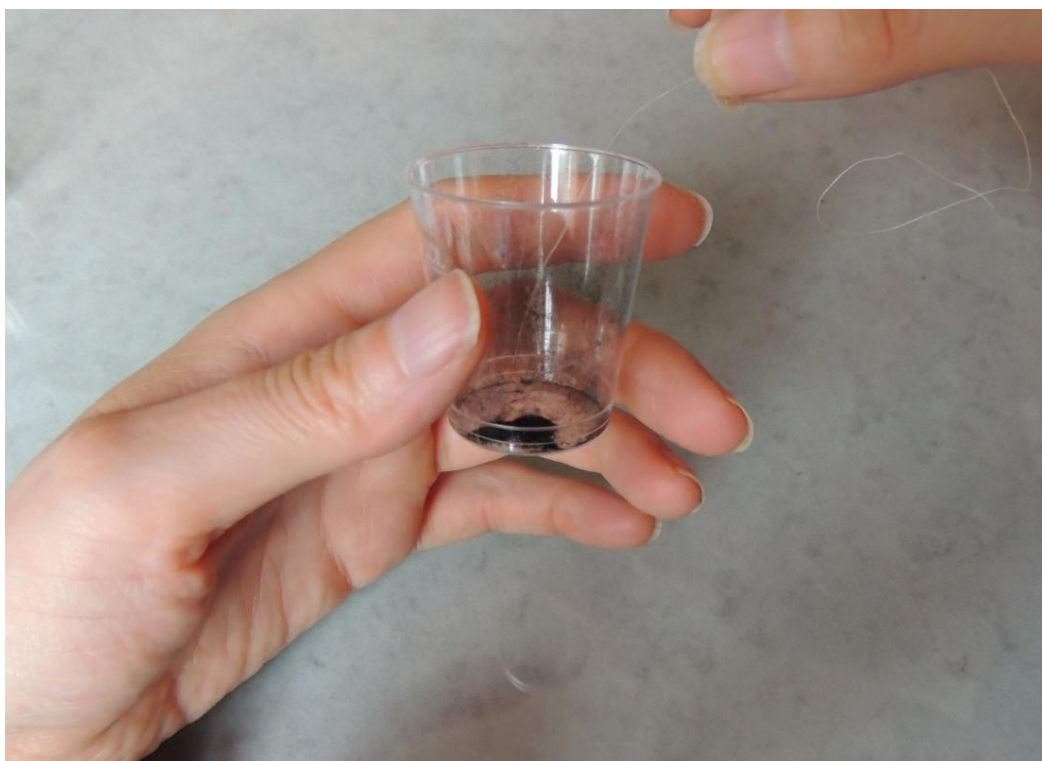
**2.** Hold one end of the coconut fibre and dip the other end in to a very small amount of tacky glue.

*The amount of glue should be small enough to just cover the tip of the strand (pictured right).*

*This will become the body of the bumblebee.*



**3.** Dip the tip of the strand with the tacky glue into the black fun flock first so that enough of the fine fibres adhere to it, then very gently press the tip of the strand into the base of your container to compress as much of the flock fibres on to the strand as possible. Leave it to dry for 2 minutes.



4. Gently blow away any excess flock. At this point your bumblebee should look similar to the photo on the right.



*Measure your bumblebee each time you add more flock.*

5. Repeat steps 2 - 4, but this time use the **Yellow** flock followed by **black, yellow, black** and finally the **white** flocking in that order. The flocking should start to form a stripy pattern as shown.



*You should have alternated between black and yellow flock 5 times before you use the white flock for the bumblebee's 'buff' tail.*

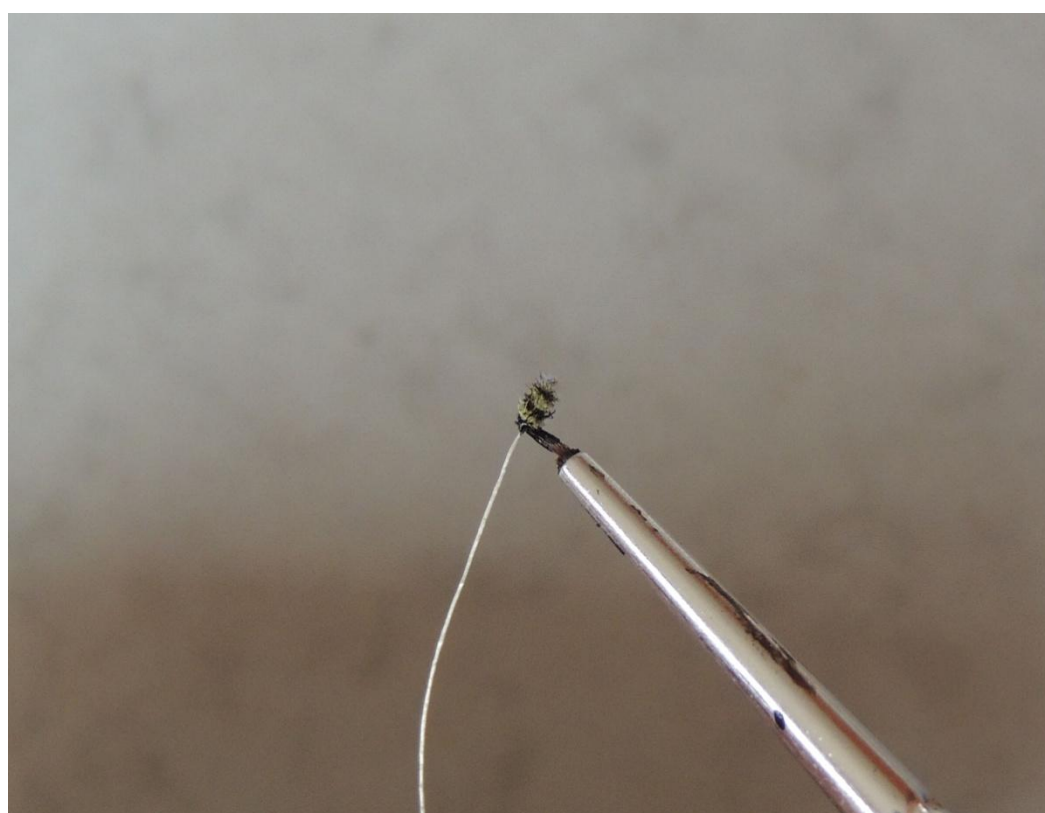
Once you have finished **step 5** leave the whole piece to dry in a safe place for 5 minutes making sure it isn't touching any surfaces.

Then very carefully snip off any straggly hairs with a sharp pair of embroidery scissors.

**Take care not to snip the coconut fibre!**

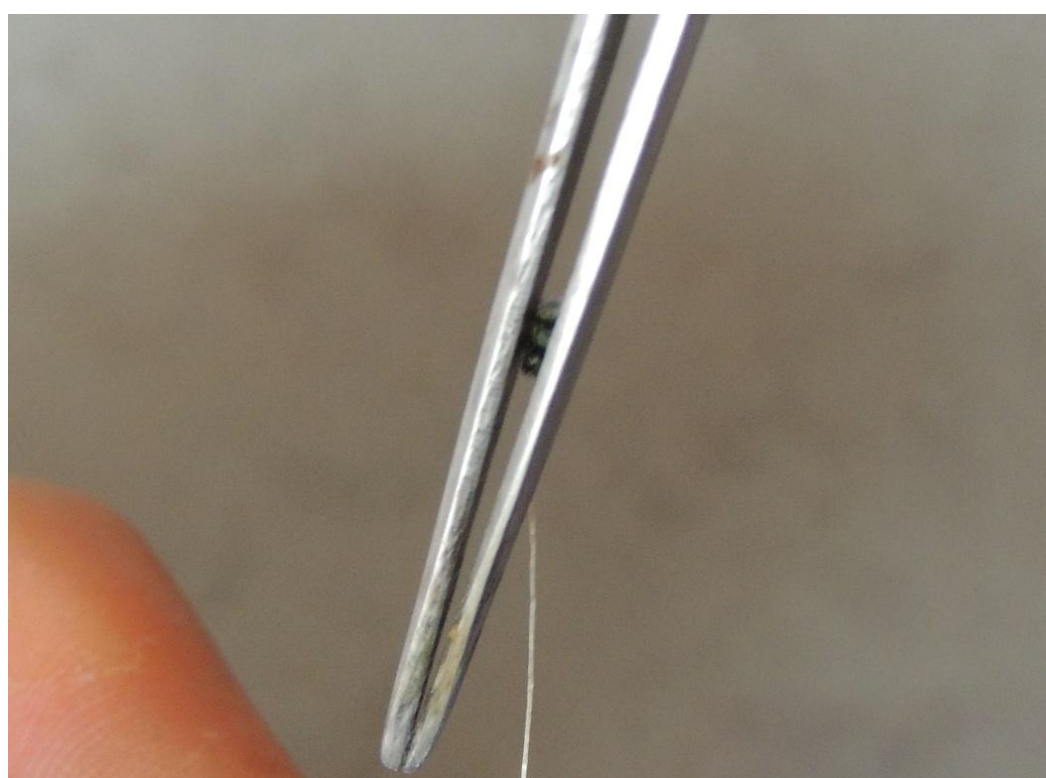


**6.** Paint the head of the bumblebee onto the fibre strand (pictured right) next to the first band of black flock using a tiny bead of black acrylic paint. The paint can be built up between coats to the size that you want. The acrylic paint has a glossy sheen to it which can give the impression of compound eyes without having to go in to too much detail



*Leave the paint to dry for 2 minutes*

**7.** If the body needs some shape and definition this can be done by using tweezers. Gently squeeze the sides of the bumblebee into a more realistic shape by placing it between the tweezers tips. Use only very light pressure and make sure not to tug on the bumblebee or it may come away from the strand and get lost. This step may need some practice.



**Tip:** *At this stage you can experiment with making tiny antennae or legs out of strands of flock if you wish*

## Part II - Making bumblebee wings

### Steps 1 - 8

The wings in this tutorial are made from an unused produce bag made from translucent high density polythene that can be found in supermarkets. It is lightweight, very thin and stretchable, but any similar type of plastic will be suitable.

The strip of plastic I used for the wings in this tutorial was 2 cm long and around 1 mm width. Cutting a longer strip of plastic will allow you to hold it more easily when it comes to positioning it onto the bee. The lengths of the wings can be snipped into proportion once they have been glued into position. A photo of a real bumblebee has been included on the last page for you to determine the length of the wings in proportion to their body. Since your bumblebee is handmade there may be slight variations in size, so for this reason it is best to gauge the size of the wings by eye so that they are in proportion with your own bumblebee.

1. Cut a small piece of plastic from the plastic bag, 2 cm x 2 cm should be large enough to handle comfortably.



2. Stretch the plastic so that the tension in the plastic fibres are weakened, this will cause the plastic to lose its shape and crumple but in miniature scale the small variations in the crumpled plastic can give the appearance of veined wings.





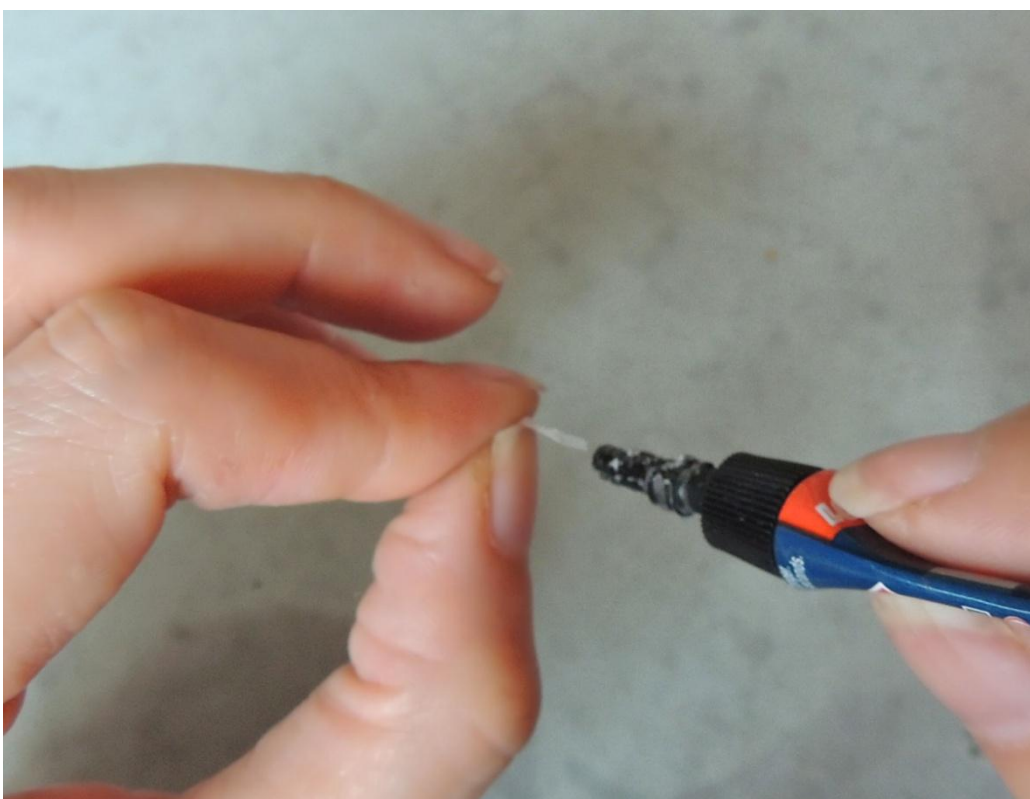
**3.** Cut out a very thin strip of plastic approximately 1mm wide so that is in proportion to the size of your bee. The length of the strip should be quite long so it is easy enough to handle I find 2 cm is long enough.



**4.** Once the strip of plastic is cut out, snip the end at a diagonal angle so that it is slanted as shown in the photo below.



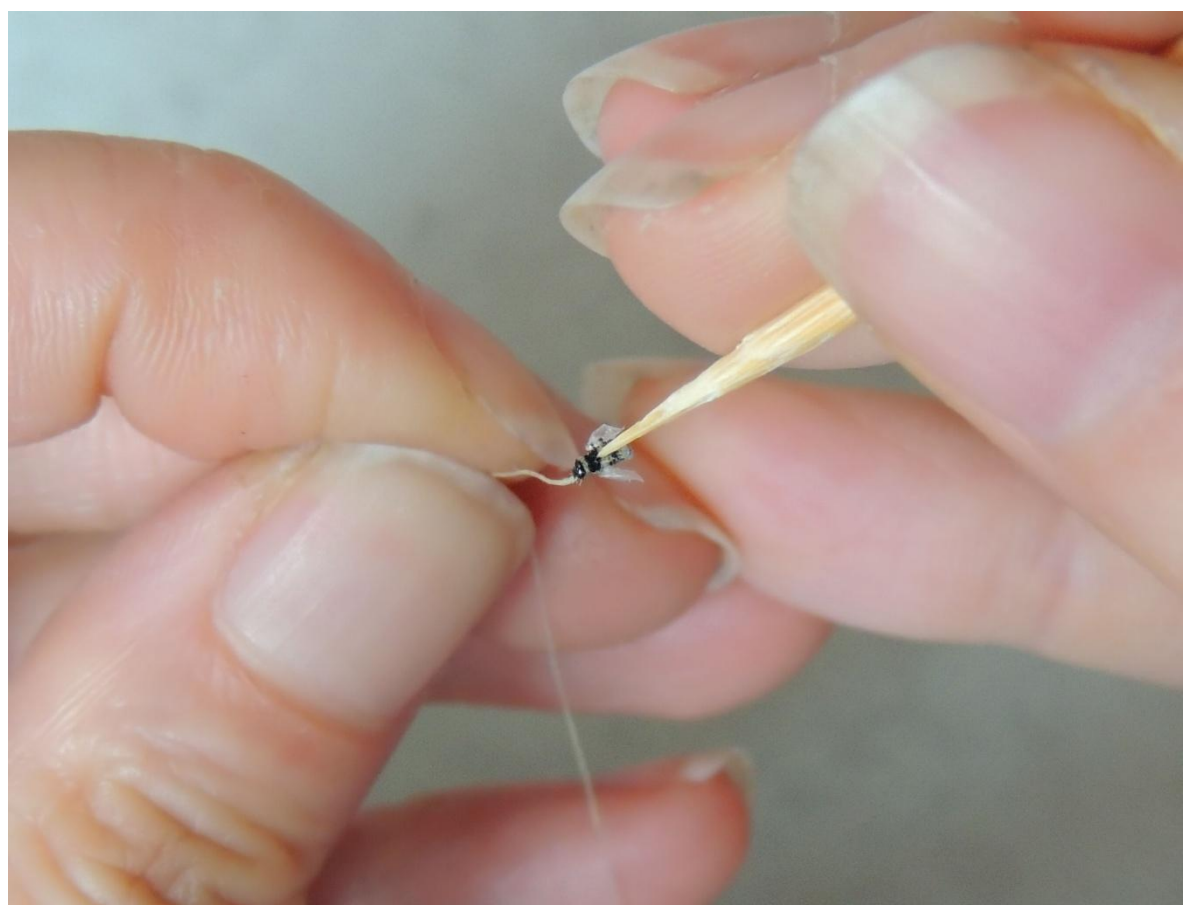
**5.** Put a miniscule amount of super glue onto the pointed tip of the wing. It can take practice to avoid getting glue on your fingers so to make things easier a put small amount of glue on a scrap piece of plastic or other non porous material; the wing tip can then be dipped into it using tweezers.



**6.** Position and glue the wing onto the second black band nearest to the bumblebee's head. At this point the wing will look like the ones in the photo (pictured right). Leave it to dry for 5 minutes and repeat steps **3 – 5** on the previous page for the second wing.



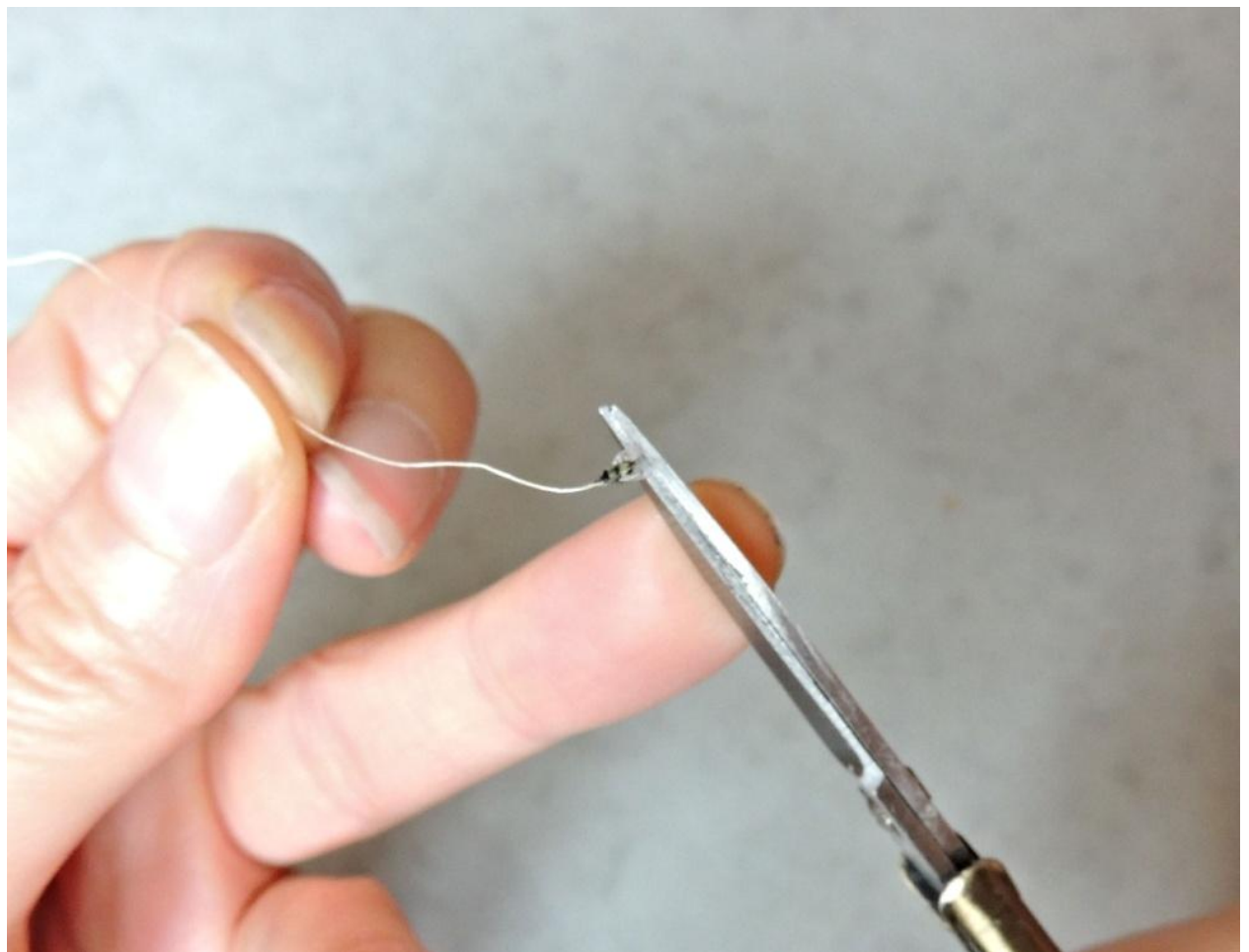
**7.** After the glue for the wings has dried redefine the second black band on the bee's body with a dot of fabric paint. Use the pointed end of a cocktail stick as shown in the photo (right). Hardly any paint is needed for this so take care not to use too much.



At this stage the rest of the bumblebee's black stripes can be emphasised using a very small amount of black fabric paint if necessary. I used an old size 2/0 paint brush cut down to 2 bristles thick to paint over the existing black bands.



**8.** Snip the length of the wings until they are in proportion to your bumblebee's body.

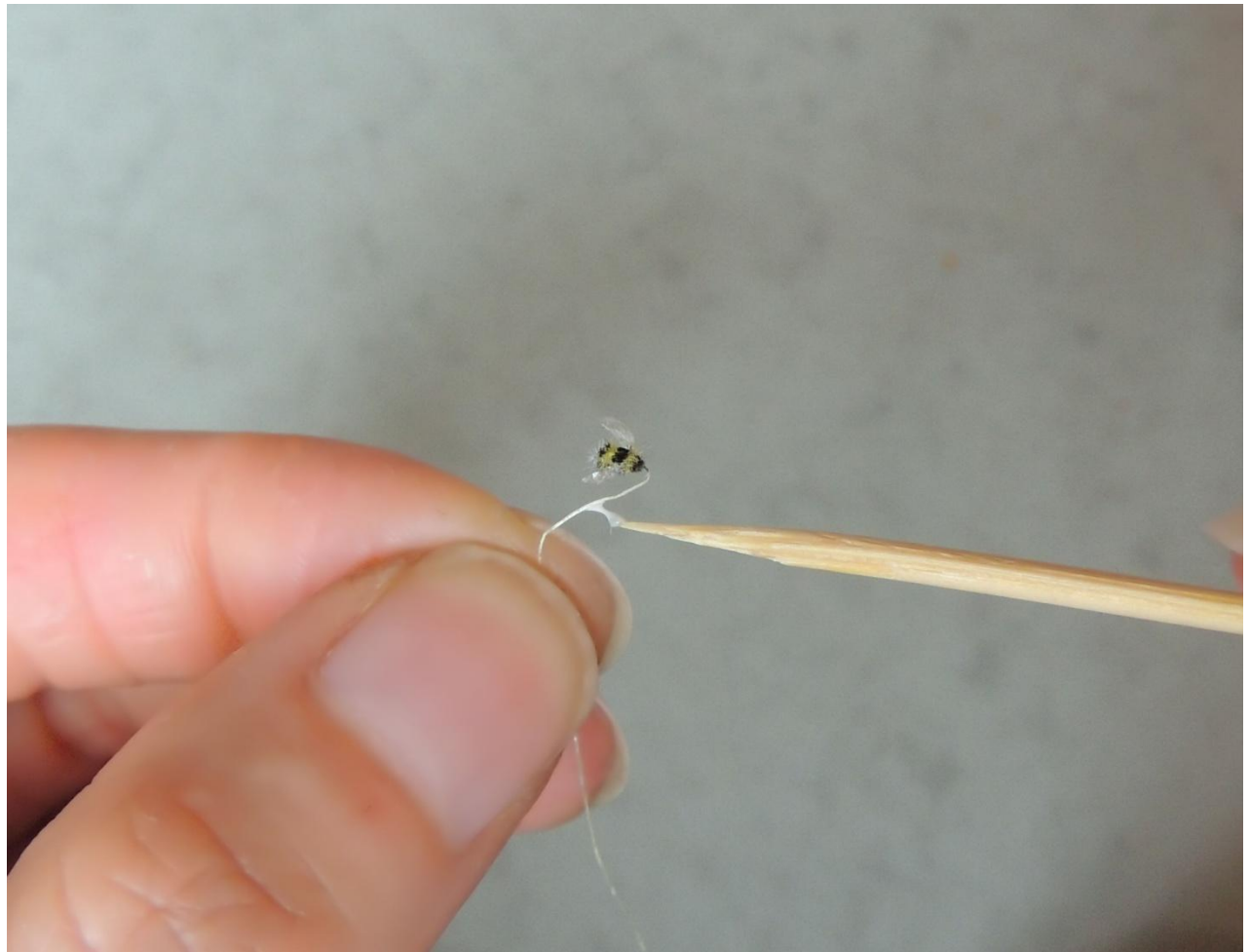




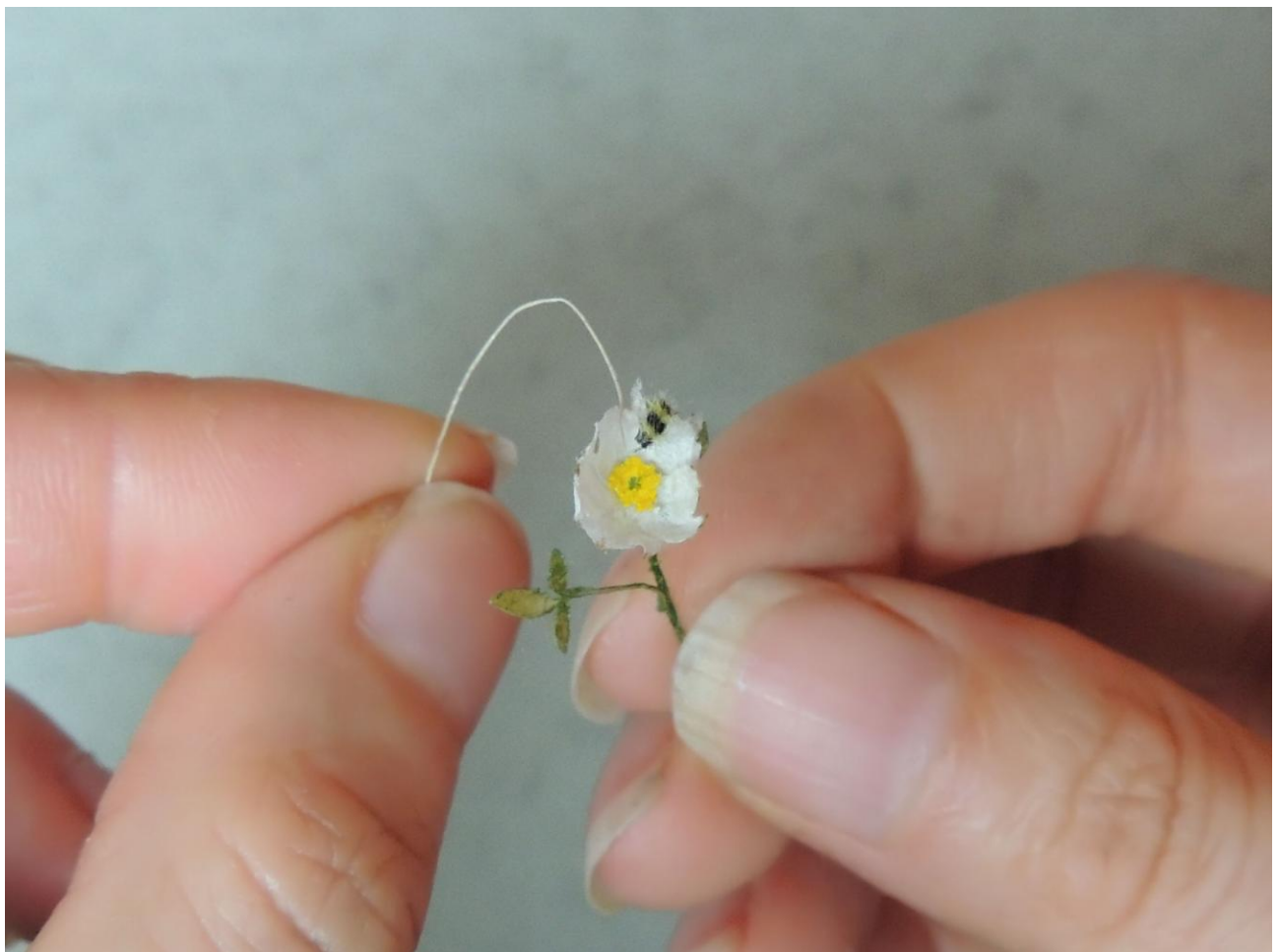
### Part III - Attaching your bumblebee to a flower

#### Steps 1 - 4

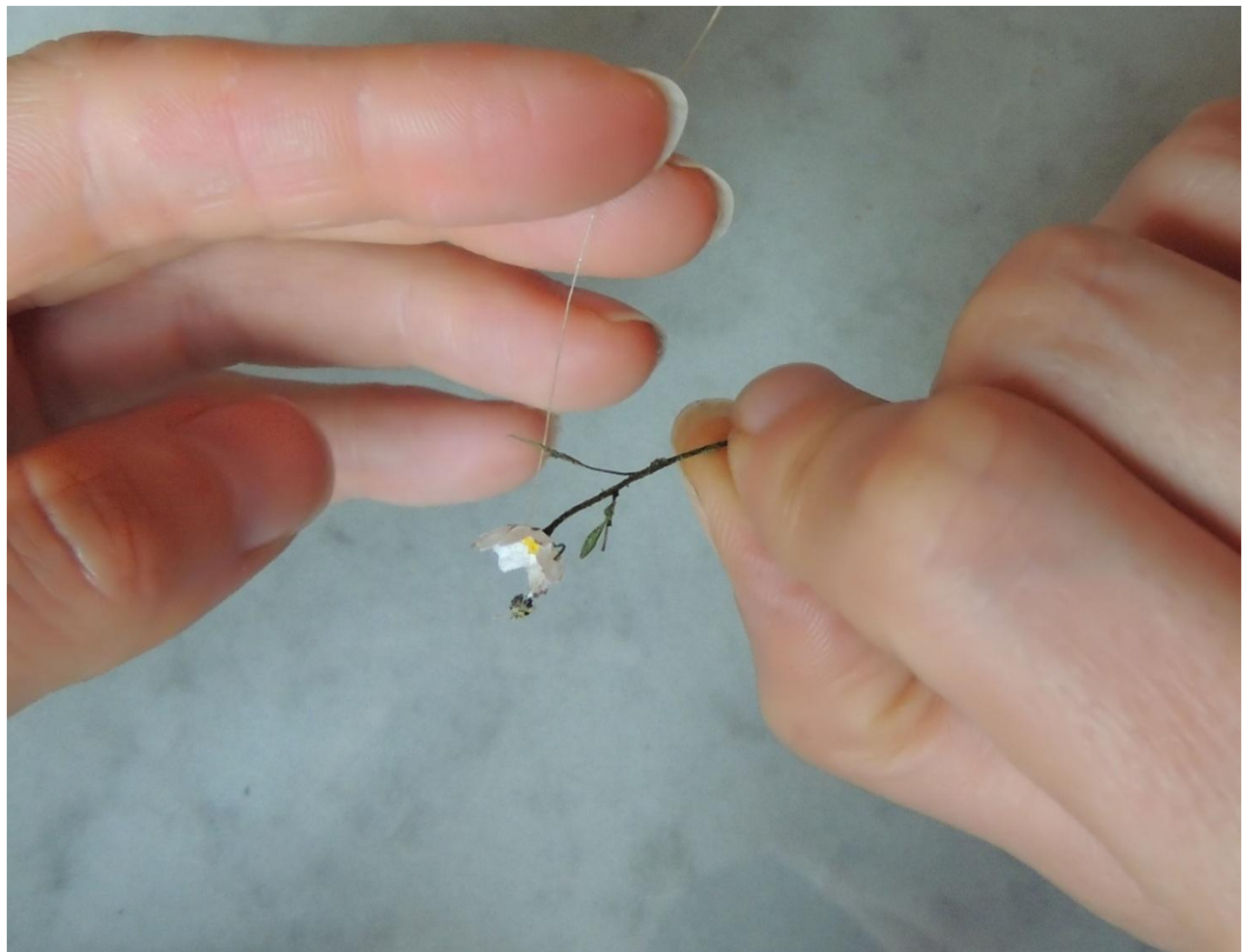
**1.** Add a small amount of tacky glue around 1 cm away from the bee along the coconut strand. Use tacky wax if you don't want the bumblebee to be fixed permanently.



**2.** Hold the length of the fibre strand and position the bumblebee on your plant or flower.



**3.** The stem should be hidden in between the foliage or petals and can be glued into position but only if you wish to have it fixed permanently, otherwise tacky wax should be used.

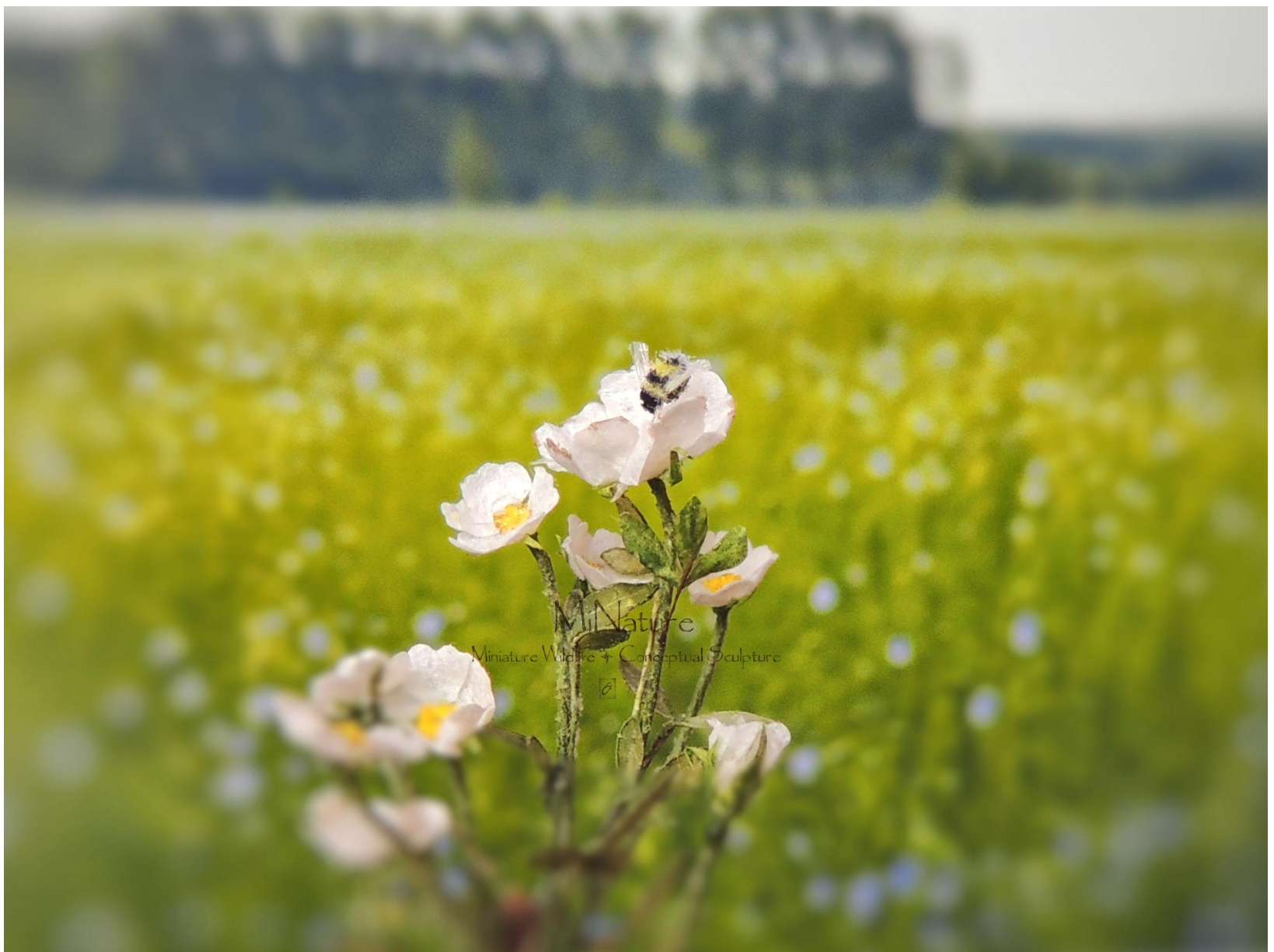


**4.** Once the bumblebee is in position snip off the rest of the fibre strand with scissors at the desired length.



Your bumblebee should now be finished!





1:12<sup>th</sup> scale bumblebee in a summer scene





*The Cherokee roses pictured in the above photos are made by miniature flower artisan Ilona Kraassenberg, visit her blog to see more of her beautiful work at [minimumloon.blogspot.co.uk](http://minimumloon.blogspot.co.uk)*



**Actual Bumblebee reference:** *pixabay free images*

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[www.minature.org.uk](http://www.minature.org.uk)