



Bee Hotel

Our native bees really need your help, so why not build them a bee hotel?

Noticed that there are fewer bees in your garden lately?

This is due to many factors which include the use of pesticides and the lack of bees natural habitat.

Bees are vital for cross pollination of flowers, vegetables crops and fruit trees not only for suburban gardens but also for farms, parklands, plant nurseries and community gardens. One way you can help is to re-introduce these often unknown little pollinators back into our environment.



Australian Solitary Native Bees

There are more than 1,500 species of Native Solitary Bees varying in appearance and size from 2mm to 10mm. Solitary Bees do not live in hives but nest and lay their young in hollow logs or twigs, old plant stems or cracks in walls.

They are non-aggressive and virtually stingless. Native Bees find it difficult to survive in modern gardens planted with virtually pollen free succulents, palms and ornamental grasses.

But you can help to re-populate the Native Bee numbers by building a bee hotel in which they can safely nest and lay their young and by also planting some pollen laden plants.

So why not get the family together this weekend and make one for your garden... it's so easy! The bees and the eco-system will love you for it!

Find us on facebook. Simply search for 'Build a Bee Hotel'

Bee Hotel is run by participants in Hume City Council's Enviro Champions program.

Find out more here: www.hume.vic.gov.au/envirochampions

Bee images courtesy of <http://bowerbird.org.au/>





The Do's and Don'ts of building a

Bee Hotel

There are no building diagrams here for bee hotels, reason beeing is that you are encouraged to use your imagination to create either something simple and rustic or elaborate and sculptural. Either way, the bees will just be happy to have a safe home.



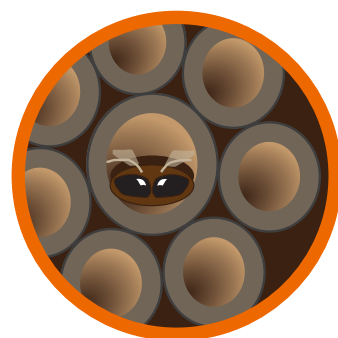
Materials

For the construction and in keeping with the theme of sustainability, it is preferable to use only natural materials like recycled timber (i.e. old red gum timber fence palings or maybe an old kitchen cupboard, fruit crate etc. Timber scraps and off-cuts can often be sourced from your local builders merchants).

Do not use composite materials such as cardboard, particle board or chip board, as they tend to disintegrate in wet weather.

Construction

The box does not need to be any deeper than 15cm. It can be filled with a selection of different diameter garden canes or bamboo cut to size or block of timber with various sized holes drilled into it. Go on a hunt around the garden and see what you can find, like old hollow twigs or dried out plant stems. Remember the bees range in size from 2mm to 10mm so try to vary the size of the 'tunnels'.



Here are a few basic rules

If you want to have 'No Vacancies' in your hotel:

- It is vital that all wood is chemically untreated
- If the hotel is free standing and fixed securely to a pole, it must be fixed with a solid backing to keep out the wind and rain.
- If the hotel is fixed to a wall, it does not require a backing but it's a good idea to place chicken wire over it to stabilise the contents.
- It is necessary to place a sloping roof on the hotel with a generous overhang and a little bee landing strip would be appreciated.
- The hotel must be placed in a warm sunny and sheltered spot at least 1 meter off the ground but no more than 2 meters above it.

So now that you are armed with these helpful hints, all you have to do is let your imagination go wild and be the first of your neighbours to have this unique accommodation for your native bees. But why stop at one? Why not make some for birthday or Christmas gifts for family and friends.

So get Beeezy and join the proud rank of becoming a 'bee hotelier'.

Oh and please don't forget to do some pollen friendly plantings, the bees will love you for it!

