



# BEE HOUSES



*A male mason bee with pollen on its back*

## WHAT IS A BEE HOUSE?

Artificial bee houses can be made or purchased and are used by wild bees such as mason and leafcutting bees. These bees are 'solitary', meaning that they don't live in colonies. Each female makes her own nest in natural or artificial tunnels.

**Natural nesting is the best way to support native bees, but if done right, artificial nesting can provide a boost to wild bees and be a fun, educational, and engaging activity.**

### No Fear of Stings!

Wild solitary bees are very unlikely to sting you; give them some space and they will be your pollinator powerhouses.

## BUYING A BEE HOUSE

Many bee houses offered at stores are not properly designed to allow for cocoon removal and cleaning. Some houses have tunnels that are far too wide to be used by any native bees and invite pest species such as social wasps. Bee houses with too many nesting sites in one structure can provide a buffet for predators and a breeding ground for parasites and diseases.

When buying a bee house, make sure the structure has tunnels that can be cleaned!

More specifications on pg 2.



*Bee houses are fun and educational*

## DIY BEE HOUSES

Create your own bee house from materials around your home or woodshop!

**Housing:** the outer housing can be made from wood, pvc piping, or recyclables like cans and milk containers.

**Nesting:** the nest tunnels are within the housing. They can be made by drilling holes in wood blocks, logs (no need for housing in this case), or cut lumber. If you're not into wood working, harvest plant stems such as hollow reeds, roll newspaper, or purchase cardboard straws. Make sure the back of the tunnel is sealed so light does not come in.

Making various sized tunnels, .35" and less, can attract a variety of bee types!



*Materials from around your house can be turned into bee houses*

*Modular trays or reed, paper, or cardboard straws are great options*



## LOCATING AND CARING FOR YOUR BEE HOUSE

- Mount to a solid object like a post, house, or fence.
- Orient so it is facing direct sunlight in the morning.
- Make sure there are flowers near the house.
- At eye level ~3-6' (~1-2 m) above the ground.
- Can be placed on balconies, up to 10 stories.
- Area is free of pesticides that are harmful to bees.

## WHETHER BUYING OR MAKING, FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

- Tunnels can be opened to remove cocoons and clean (paper, cardboard, reeds, modular trays).
- Beware of bamboo; cocoons cannot be removed.
- Tunnels are at least 6" (15 cm) long.
- Tunnels are .35" (9 mm) or less in diameter.
- Structure can be firmly secured (not swinging).
- Nest tunnels have protection from elements (roof).



[www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)

*Find more information on pollinators and creating and caring for bee houses see [pollinator.org](http://pollinator.org), [this video](#), and [Crown Bees](#)*

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PARTNERSHIP**

Protect their lives. Preserve ours.