

Welcome solitary native bees to your garden with Backyard Bee Homes.

We have over 2,000 species of solitary native bees in Australia which don't form colonies. Female solitary bees create unique nests which they pack with a pollen / nectar food mix then lay their eggs. In spring the next generation of bees emerge.

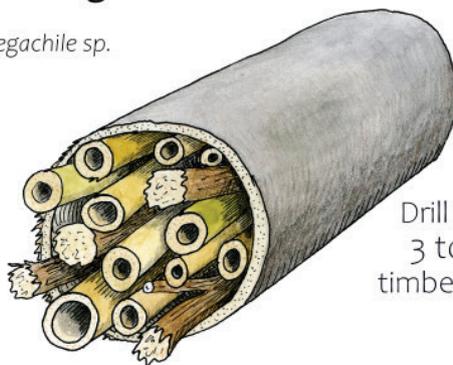
Boarders build nests in existing hollows.



Leaf-cutter Bees *Megachile* sp.
5-14mm



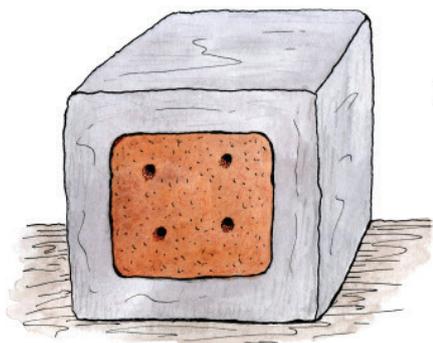
Resin Bees *Megachile* sp.
8-14mm



Make a Bee Home with bamboo in PVC pipe. Cut 10 to 15cm tube with end blocked.

Drill a range of holes from 3 to 10mm in untreated timber like an old fence post.

Burrowers build nests by digging into earth banks or ground.



Make a Bee Home by mixing clay and sand to fill a concrete block.

Leave some bare ground in your garden or behind a rock wall.



Teddy Bear Bee
Amegilla bombiformis
18mm

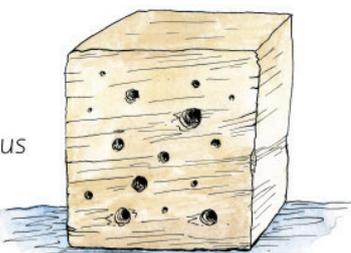
Blue Banded Bee
Amegilla cingulata
12mm



Borers build nests by chewing a hollow in soft timber.



Green Carpenter Bee
Xylocopa (Lestis) aeratus
20mm



Make a Bee Home by drilling a range of holes in a scrap block of untreated pine.

Great Carpenter Bee
Xylocopa (Koptortosoma) aruana
24mm



DIY Info



Backyard Bee Homes are great DIY projects to make with your kids using recycled materials.

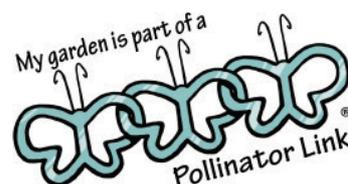


Illustrations: Paula Peeters



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More useful information about creating hotels for solitary bees can be found below.

Bee hotels out of a block of wood

You can make a bee hotel out of a block of wood by drilling holes into the wood. There are very specific requirements for these holes - if the holes are the wrong size the holes won't be used.

The most commonly used dimensions for holes drilled into block of wood are -

- 5mm hole, 120 mm deep
- 6mm hole, 150 mm deep
- 8mm hole, 150 mm deep

You can find drill bits at hardware stores that are specifically designed for drilling holes - however, it can be tricky to drill such a long hole without breaking the drill bit so if you're not confident with the drill then making your bee hotel by binding sticks together might be better.

Bee hotels out of sticks or stems

Make a bee hotel by binding a bunch of sticks together. You will need to use particular sticks or stems that bees can burrow into it. Examples of the types of sticks that you could use include pithy stems from dried hydrangea stems, fennel stems, lantana canes, or lengths of bamboo.

Where to install your bee hotel

Take a walk around your school and see if there's a suitable site, you might already have a native habitat garden that you could add to or you might identify a new site - it doesn't have to be a large space, a few bee hotels don't take up much room but are vitally important to native bees. However, you need to ensure your bee hotel has an east facing entrance that faces the morning sun.

Hotel maintenance

Bee hotels need to be cleaned to avoid diseases spreading and to keep any parasites away. Begin by cleaning out the holes with a pipe cleaner. Then store the nests into a freezer for a week to kill - this will kill any mites or parasites left in the nest.

You can then return your bee hotels to the same site.