

HOW TO BUILD A BEE HOTEL

You may have heard about the decline of honeybees, but our native bee species are struggling too! Building a bee hotel is an excellent way to provide habitat for mason bees. In the wild, mason bees like to use hollow spaces as their homes. Females gather mud to build cells to hold their eggs, which they lay on top of pollen. Mason bees are very gentle and do not sting!

YOU WILL NEED:

- A medium-sized tin can or wooden box
- Clean nesting tubes, such as:
 - Regular size paper drinking straws
 - Small-diameter bamboo canes (knot free)
 - Parchment paper (rolled around a pencil and fastened with non-toxic glue)
- An east facing spot that isn't too windy to place your bee hotel (this may require hanging it or screwing it to a wall or post)
- Nearby mud and flowering native plants



Photo from: Wayland Library





BUILDING A BEE HOTEL



1 Gather your supplies and ensure that the materials are clean. Decorate the outside of your container however you wish, but keep the inside clean. If you want your bee hotel to be screwed to a wall or post, do this before assembling.

2 Cut your nesting tubes to be slightly shorter than the length of the can or box. The "over hang" from the can will protect bees from rain and flying predators, like birds.



Photo from: Urban Bees Blog

3 Fill the can or container with your shortened nesting tubes as best you can!



4 Secure your new bee hotel in a sturdy place that is at least 3 feet off the ground and in the morning sun. Bees will not stay in a hotel that swings in the wind, so make sure your hotel is secure to protect the eggs.

5 Encourage bees to visit your yard by planting a pollinator garden near your hotel, and consider adding a small source of mud nearby for females to use. If you want to reuse your bee hotel, you will need to replace the nesting tubes each spring!

