

# Solitary Pollen Bee Nest

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(AT505)

*The following instructions were provided by the manufacturer.*

## **Installing the Pollen Nest**

Choose a location that is not exposed to the weather. A south easterly exposure is preferred, the morning sun will warm the area.

A height from 12" to 50" is recommended. Locate the nest on a post, wall or tree, using the two nails supplied. Install the nest with a slope of 1/4" to the front. This will stop water from running into the nesting tubes. The nails can be left projecting to obtain the slope.

It is unlikely that pollen bees will start using your nest immediately, but if after a few weeks there are no bees using the tubes relocate to another area in your garden. Some bees do not completely fill the tubes but seal them further inside. The developing bees will stay in the nest tubes until the next year, approximately the same time that the female laid the egg the previous year.

The nest can be left out year round as the granular proprietary filler will insulate the nesting tubes and keep them dry. If you wish to store the nest in a garden shed, keep it horizontal and place it outside in early spring.

During the year as the nesting tubes become filled, placing an adhesive disk, supplied with the kit, over the occupied nest tube will help prevent pests and parasites from raiding it. These disks should be removed at the first sign of warm spring weather.

During the time that the bees are active, they seal the cells in the bee tubes with a mixture of mud and saliva, by placing a dish of water with a stone to land on and a pile of earth in the middle you are helping the bee to forage.

The bee nest provides for a safe nesting site for the female bee. The construction is waterproof and weather tight, during the winter the ground volcanic rock filler that surrounds the bee tubes acts as a desiccant to keep the cocoons dry (bees create moisture during their period of diapause which would attract microscopic fungi and rot and kill the pupa). The volcanic rock particles also protect the pupa from the varroa mites which die if they tunnel through the particles from tube to tube. Some mites will always gain entry to the tubes because mites hide in the flowers and attach themselves to the bees while they collect pollen, also the rock particles are an excellent insulator during extreme hot and cold periods.

## **Choosing the Right Flowers**

To help bees and other pollinator insects - like butterflies - you should provide a range of plants that will offer a succession of flowers, and thus pollen and nectar, through the whole growing season. Patches of foraging habitat can be created in many different locations, from backyards and school grounds to golf courses and city parks. Even a small area planted with the right flowers will be beneficial, because each patch will add to the mosaic of habitat available to bees and other pollinators.

In such a short fact sheet it is not possible to give detailed lists of suitable plants for all regions. Below are two lists of good bee plants, the first is native plants and the

second of garden plants. Both are short lists; there are many more bee-friendly plants. However, these lists, combined with the following notes, will get you started on selecting good bee plants. Your local chapter of the Native Plant Society and native plant nurseries are worthwhile contacts for advice on choosing, obtaining, and caring for local plant species.

**Use local native plants.** Research suggests native plants are four times more attractive to native bees than exotic flowers. In gardens, heirloom varieties of herbs and perennials can also provide good foraging.

**Choose several colors of flowers.** Flower colors that particularly attract bees are blue, purple, violet, white and yellow.

**Plant flowers in clumps.** Flowers clustered into clumps of one species will attract more pollinators than individual plants scattered through the habitat patch. Where spaces allows, make clumps four feet or more in diameter

**Include flowers of different shapes.** Bees are all different sizes, have different tongue lengths, and will feed on different shaped flowers. Consequently, providing a range of flower shapes means more bees can benefit.

**Have a diversity of plants flowering all season.** By having several plant species flowering at once, and a sequence of plants flowering through spring, summer and fall, you can support a range of bee species that fly at different times of the year.

## Native Plants

Native plants should be your first choice to help our native bees. Listed below are some plants that are good sources of nectar or pollen for bees. This list is not exhaustive; there are many other plants good for bees. Individual species have not been included. Not all of these genera will have species in your local area, but they do represent plants that will grow in a variety of environments. Use a wildflower guide or contact local nurseries to find your local species.

Aster	<i>Symphotrichum</i>	Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia</i>
Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum</i>	Penstemon	<i>Penstemon</i>
Bee balm	<i>Monarda</i>	Prairie clover	<i>Dalea</i>
Blazing star	<i>Liatris</i>	Purple coneflower	<i>Echinacea</i>
Ceanothus, buckbrush	<i>Ceanothus</i>	Rabbitbrush	<i>Chrysothamnus</i>
Creosote bush	<i>Larrea</i>	Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron</i>
Currant	<i>Ribes</i>	Sage	<i>Salvia</i>
Giant hyssop	<i>Agastache</i>	Scorpion-weed	<i>Phacelia</i>
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i>	Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos</i>
Joe-pye-weed	<i>Eupatorium</i>	Spiderwort	<i>Tradescantia</i>
Lupine	<i>Lupinus</i>	Sunflower	<i>Helianthus</i>
Milkweed	<i>Asclepias</i>	Willow	<i>Salix</i>

## Garden Plants

Flower beds in gardens, business campuses and parks are great places to have bee-friendly plants. Native plants will create a beautiful garden but some people prefer "garden plants". Many garden plants are varieties of native plants. This list includes plants from other countries - "exotic" plants - and should be used as a supplement to the native plant list. As with the native plants, this list is far from exhaustive.

Basil	<i>Ocimum</i>	English lavender	<i>Lavandula</i>
Borage	<i>Borago</i>	Marjoram	<i>Origanum</i>
Blanketflower	<i>Gaillardia</i>	Mexican Sunflower	<i>Tithonia</i>

Catnip  
Cotoneaster

*Nepeta*  
*Cotoneaster*

Rosemary  
Russian sage

*Rosmarinus*  
*Perovskia*

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