

DIY Pollinator Habitat

Presented by



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Why should I provide nesting and egg-laying sites for pollinators?

While most of us know of the dire situation of the honeybees, we sometimes forget about other pollinators. With a little bit of planning and work, you can provide a nesting and egg-laying site for other beneficial pollinators. Unlike honeybees, the vast majority (70%) of the approximately 2,800 species of bees nest in the ground, and around 1,200 species nest in tunnels. Keeping this in mind you can construct (or purchase) your own bee-nesting site.

What kinds of bees are in your area?

As you begin your preparations survey your site. What are the bees that are prevalent in your area? Also, keep in mind that you should be observant throughout the season, as different pollinators are more active during different months. As there are so many types of bees, we are still in the process of understanding all of their nesting idiosyncrasies. So the better observer and urban naturalist you become, the better chance we have of helping the area's bees.

Tunnel-Nesting Bees:

The two most common tunnel-nesting bees are leafcutter and mason bees. The nesting sites that these bees choose are typically bored holes into wood, however it's important to keep in mind that different bees prefer different diameters and lengths of tunnels. You can easily provide a DIY nest by using a preservative-free block of wood approximately 4X4 or 4X6, drill holes anywhere between 3/22 and 3/8" in diameter and 3 to 6" deep. Use a good drill bit to ensure a smoother tunnel which bees prefer, or insert paper straws or wax paper. If you want you can paint or char the outside of your nest, as dark colors seem to attract tunneling bees. If this seems like too much carpentry work for you, try bundling hollowed out stems like thistle, bamboo, and other hollowed out materials in a container.

Additional Resources:

Attracting Native Pollinators by The Xerces Society | www.xerces.org | plants.usda.gov

About Westside Bee Boyz

With over 50 years combined beekeeping experience, we are committed to keeping, educating, and promoting urban beekeeping and honeybees as well as other pollinators. Located in the heart of Chicago's Westside, it is our goal to serve the city's bees and beekeepers as stewards to both. We pride ourselves in taking the natural approach to beekeeping by avoiding potentially harmful chemicals and treatments. We manage hives across the Chicagoland area from Lincoln Park Zoo to Shedd Aquarium to Chicago's downtown rooftops as well as our own apiary. We provide consulting and beekeeping management services as well as selling bees, beekeeping equipment, and our own raw honey at local farmers markets.

Future Workshops:

Curious About Beekeeping?

Wednesday, July 29th @ 5pm

Want to learn what it takes to be a beekeeper? Learn the basics and get a primer from Westside Bee Boyz' head beekeeper Naaman Gambill.

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bee next? Follow us on
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