

Scouting at Home



Suitable for: Scouts & Venturers

Time needed: 90 minutes



Outdoor & Community
Challenge Area

Build a bee house

Bees are vital to our environment, help solitary bees by building them a nesting house out of salvaged wood.



Did you know?

There are around 1700 species of native bees in Australia. Most are solitary and raise their young in burrows in the ground or in tiny hollows in timber.

What you need:

- 10cm x 10cm x 35cm pine or other hardwood post
- 15cm x 15cm x 2cm pine or other hardwood board
- Extra scraps of wood for practising using the drill
- Measuring tape
- Pencil
- Saw
- Goggles
- Clamp for holding wood during drilling
- Drill and 8mm drill bit
- Sandpaper
- Weather-resistant nails
- Hammer
- Picture hanger and 2 nails

Instructions

1 Before starting, make sure you know how to safely use all of the equipment, you may need an adult to help you with some parts of this project.

2 We all know that bees live in hives, but many native species are solitary and use tunnels and hollows to lay their eggs. You can help these solitary bees out, by making them a nesting house. The exact size of the bee house isn't important, the measurements are a guide only - use whatever wood you can salvage.

3 First, the top of the bee house needs to be sawed off at a 20-degree angle, so that the roof of the house slopes slightly. This is to help protect the bee house from rain. The same should be done for the back edge of the piece of wood that will be the roof, so that it sits flat against the wall when you hang it up.

4 If you want neat rows (the bees won't mind), create uniform holes by marking them out first. Find the middle of the front side of the post, then measure 5cm down from the top and mark with the pencil. Measure 2.5cm outwards on both sides and make two more marks. This is your top row. Measure 2cm below the first row and make three marks underneath. Continue this process until you are about 5cm from the bottom. You can draw lines to make this easier.

5 Anyone who hasn't used a drill should practise first, after instruction and with supervision. Goggles should be worn and long hair tied back. Bees prefer laying eggs in deep tunnels, so drill the holes as deep as possible, at least 7cm.

6 Next, carefully attach the roof, so that it is flush with the back of the bee house. One nail hammered into each corner will hold it in place.

7 The house will need sanding. A small piece of sandpaper wrapped around a pencil is a good way to smooth the holes, and a ruler or small wooden block for the edges.

8 Once the hanger is attached using the hammer and nails, hang the bee house in a sunny location. Make sure nobody is allergic to bees. Without getting too close to the bees, monitor the bee house to see how many bees use it. Do some research and see if you can identify all of the bees using your house <https://www.aussiebee.com.au/keyfacts.html>

