

Support Pollinators!

Build a D-I-Y Native Bee House

I ILLINOIS

Extension

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Materials Needed:

- Empty toilet paper roll
- Hollow stems, bamboo or paper straws
- Acrylic paint and paintbrush, duct tape or crayons
- Rubber band
- String
- Putty, tinfoil or some material to plug up stem/straw holes



Steps for Building:

1. Seal the cardboard toilet paper roll to help keep weather from destroying it. Some choices are to paint with acrylic paint, add a layer of tape, color with a crayon or dip it in wax.
2. Put string through the toilet paper roll and tie the string so it could be hung above the ground.
3. Cut hollow stems, bamboo or straws to 3.5 inch pieces.
Since toilet paper rolls are about 4 inches long, the 0.5 inches of leftover space creates a roof that will protect entryway for bees.
Cut enough pieces to fit snugly into roll (amount varies depending on stem size).
4. Tie stems or straws tightly together with a rubber band before placing into toilet paper roll.
5. Stuff tied bunch of stems or straws into toilet paper roll.
6. Leave a fingertip of space on one end to help keep weather from hitting the stem or straw openings.
7. Plug the other end of roll with putty or secure tinfoil onto one end using a rubber band (this way bees only have one entry point into stems or straws).
8. Hang the house so it faces east or southeast and is 3 to 5 feet off of the ground in an area protected from weather. The house can also be wedge between tree branches (look for "V" shaped branches). Any time during the growing season is a good time to place the habitat outside.
9. As the weather gets warmer, each week monitor the habitat for insect activity. Study the habitat and keep a journal taking notes on any activity.
Observe a queen bee plugging up holes after she lays her eggs.
Look for bees crawling out of the holes when the weather is warmer.
Discover where the bees travel to get food. Flowers, trees?
10. Change out the pollinator house every 1 to 3 years to help keep bees from getting a disease or destroyed by enemies. When ready to change it, take the nest down and leave it on the ground for one year so bees can emerge.

Nancy Kreith, Horticulture Educator, University of Illinois Extension, kreith@illinois.edu

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign - College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences - United States Department of Agriculture - Local Extension Councils Cooperating. University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.