

Bee prepared

Build a bee hotel and welcome these crucial critters to your meeting place or garden.

You will need

- Scissors
- Small saw
- String
- Paper drinking straws
- Bamboo canes
- Clean, empty plastic bottles (two litres)
- Natural materials (for example, leaves, twigs, feathers)
- Dead hollow stems from garden plants (optional)



Learning outcomes

Value the outdoors

Enjoy being outside, feel comfortable in nature, and feel connected to the natural environment.

Help your community

Be able to take an active role in the community, give to others, and make the world a better place.

Before you begin

- Ask everyone to collect empty two litre plastic bottles, clean them, and bring them in. You'll need enough for everyone to have one each.
- If you don't have any paper drinking straws, you could roll up pieces of scrap paper.
- Use a safety checklist to help you plan and risk assess your activity. Additional coronavirus-related controls to think about may include:
 - Set up a hand washing station that you can use throughout the session.
 - Make sure people wash their hands before using any equipment and again straight afterwards.
 - Clean equipment between different people using it.
 - Remind everyone to stay two metres apart at all times.

Make your bee hotel

Time	Activity	Guidance	Equipment
10 mins	1. The person leading the activity should ask everyone what food bees give us.	Hopefully people will say honey – but did they know that bees have a big role in producing a lot of the food we eat?	
	2. Everyone should chat about the ways that bees are really important. Why are they important for people? What do they do for biodiversity (the variety of plants and animals in a certain space)?	We've included some information overleaf to get your discussion started.	
	3. Everyone should think about how what they could do to help to protect bees. One thing people can do to help bees is to make them safe spaces to shelter – like these simple bee hotels.		
5 mins	4. The person leading the activity should give everybody a plastic bottle. Using scissors, everyone should carefully cut the top and bottom off their bottle.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, empty plastic bottles (two litres) • Scissors
	5. Everyone should loop a piece of string through their bottle, so that it can be hung up outside.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • String
10 mins	6. Everyone should gather enough bamboo canes, stems, and straws to fill their bottle. They should check that they're hollow, with open ends for bees to burrow in.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bamboo canes • Dead hollow stems from garden plants (optional) • Paper drinking straws
5 mins	7. Everyone should use the scissors and saw to cut the canes, stems, and straws so that they are nearly the same length as their bottle – they should make them a few centimetres shorter, so they don't get wet in the rain and go mouldy.	An adult must supervise people using the saw; depending on the group, it might be best for an adult to do this bit for everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scissors • Small saw
5 mins	8. Everyone should push their canes, stems and straws into the bottle. They should add smaller twigs and stems in the gaps to make sure it's tightly packed.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural materials (for example, leaves, twigs, feathers)
10 mins	9. Everyone should think about where they'll put their bee hotels. They should go in a sunny spot that's at least one metre off the ground. It's best to choose somewhere that's sheltered from the rain.	People could think about outdoor spaces at home and places they visit. Some meeting spaces may have outside space, or there may be locally managed green spaces such as city farms and community orchards.	

Time	Activity	Equipment
5 mins	10. The person leading the activity should explain that it's best to move the bee hotel in autumn and winter – they should go into a dry, unheated space like a shed. Everyone should think about where they could move their bee hotel in autumn.	
	11. Everyone should share any other ideas on what they could do to help bees.	

All about bees

- Bees pollinate plants. This means that they move pollen from one plant to another plant of the same type, which allows plants to make seeds and fruit.
- Humans eat the fruit or use the seeds to grow more plants to harvest from. Bees pollinate fruits and vegetables like broccoli, apples, and tomatoes.
- Bees also pollinate plants that we use to feed animals that we eat or keep because they produce food.
- Bees help to make some of our clothes by pollinating the cotton plant.
- Bees also help pollinate many of the trees and flowers that provide habitats (places to live) for other wildlife.
- Bees are in trouble for a number of reasons, including pesticides. There are also fewer places in nature for them to live than there used to be. Some species have already gone extinct and others are at risk.
- Different species of bees are better at pollinating different types of plants, so it's important to have diversity (lots of different species of bees).
- If we didn't have bees, farmers would have to spend lots of money to find new ways to pollinate crops and everything would become more expensive. It's thought that without bees, it would cost UK farmers £1.8 billion a year to pollinate our crops. Our diets could also become less varied and less nutritious, which could impact our health.
- It's really important that bees have safe spaces to nest and hibernate as well as enough bee-friendly flowers to give them the food they need.

Adjustments

Change the level of the challenge

- Everyone could help to collect the natural materials needed for this activity.
- Everyone could find out about different types of bees. Can anyone find out what people mean when they talk about 'solitary bees'? How many species of bee are there in the UK?

Make it accessible

Adults can take a step back or get more involved depending on how people are getting on. Some people may need some extra support with the scissors or saw, for example. People could also work in pairs and help each other.

Reflection

Time	Activity
5 mins	<p>What did people learn about bees in this activity? Was anything surprising? People could think about the jobs bees do and the reasons they're in trouble at the moment.</p> <p>How do people feel about bees? Perhaps some people feel worried for the bees, frustrated that not enough is being done, or relieved they've taken action to help.</p>

Take it further

- Keep tabs on your bee hotel, and see if you can spot any bees checking in or checking out. Can you identify them? This bee identification guide from Friends of the Earth might come in handy.
- You could develop this activity into a bigger project to work towards your Community Impact Staged Activity Badge. Why not create seed bombs and create a wildflower space with “Guerrilla gardening”? You could also expand your bee hotel chain. Work together to create some five star accommodation, or create a permanent structure for a community space, and help other people to learn about bees too. Check out the RSPB’s instructions for building a bee hotel for some inspiration.

Youth shaped guidance

Invite everyone to share their ideas on how else they could support bees. What else do they want to do to protect biodiversity?

Safety

All activities must be safely managed. Use the safety checklist to help you plan and risk assess your activity. Do a risk assessment and take appropriate steps to reduce risk. Always get approval for the activity and have suitable supervision and an InTouch process.

Scissors

Supervise young people appropriately when they’re using scissors. Store all sharp objects securely, out of the reach of young people

Sharp objects

Teach young people how to use sharp objects safely. Supervise them appropriately throughout. Store all sharp objects securely, out of the reach of young people.

