Native Bee Nests

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Nesting Blocks

Drill holes ranging from 3/32" to 3/8" wide and 3-6 inches deep (3" for smaller holes, 6" for wider) in untreated wood blocks or log chunks. Holes should not go completely through the wood. Make sure the tunnels are smooth with no snags or line tunnels with paper straws. If you are using paper straws, they should be replaced yearly. If you are not using straws drill out the holes yearly after the wasps have emerged in the spring. This will help keep the block clean and reduce the accumulation of diseases and parasites. Nesting blocks should be hung 3-15 feet off the ground, on a steady, non swaying structure. Face blocks south so they receive early sun. Place the nesting block under an overhang or attach a roof to the block to reduce water and snow damage. If you notice bird damage, surrounded the block with wire mesh.

Nest blocks can be removed in November, stored in a cool dry place for the winter, and rehung in the early spring when the bees are ready to emerge. If you use paper tubes, they can be removed from the blocks at the end of the season and stored in a cool dry place. In the spring, the paper tubes can be hung near the nests allowing the bees to emerge.

Honeybeesuite.com

Naturallyearthfriendly.com

xerces.com

Stem or Tube Bundles

Many plants have pithy, soft-centered, or hollow stems that bees use for nesting sites. Sumac, box elder, elderberry, raspberry, allium, sedum, and sunflower are good examples of plants used by native bees for nesting sites. Cut stems into 6"-8" lengths. Bundle into groups or 10-20 using string, rubber bands or tape. Place the twigs horizontally in a sunny sheltered location at least 3 feet off the ground. You can attach a shield over the bundle or place twigs/tubes in a wooden box if no sheltered locations are available. Paper straws can be used instead of stems.