

How to Build a Bee Condo

Create homes for native bees!

Many of the wild bees you may encounter in your backyard garden make their burrow homes in the soil. Some bees create hives in snags (a dead or dying standing tree, often with its branches broken off), or in holes in trees. You can also encourage bee-residents by providing homemade nesting blocks or “Bee Condos.”

It’s easy to build a “Bee Condo” for your native bees.

Materials:

- 4”x6” or 6”x6” (or larger) dried pine or fir post (or you can try a weathered fence post or other scrap wood)
- Drill and drill bits, a variety of diameters, ranging from 1/4 in. to 3/8 in.
- Paper straws – not plastic (available at some hardware and garden supply stores,), small hollow sticks, or make your own with newspaper.

How to do it:

1. Cut the wooden posts into blocks 8-12 in. long.
2. Drill holes into the wood blocks using a variety of hole diameters from 1/4 in. to 3/8 in. Drill holes 3-5 in. deep, and at least 3/4 in. apart. Smooth out ragged edges of holes. Insert removable straws into holes for winter cocoon cleaning.
3. Alternatively, a bundle of paper straws or hollow sticks, with one end sealed in a housing (wood, pipe, can etc’), will make an effective bee home.
4. Mount your “Bee Condo” on a post or attach to the side of a building, post, or tree. Place nesting blocks so that tunnels are horizontal. Make sure they are in a warm location with southern exposure and protected from rain or any predators.
5. If you don’t want to build your own “Bee Condo,” we encourage you to check your local garden center for bee houses that allow for winter cocoon cleaning.
6. Watch your new residents move in!

