

CREATING A BACKYARD BEE HOTEL

Making a home for mason bees out of recycled goods will help them stay safe in your neighbourhood

What you'll need:

- 1 clean, large food can
- 10–15 sheets of recycled paper
- 1 roll of tape (any kind)
- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 pencil
- String for hanging your bee hotel

1. Prepare the materials:

With adult supervision, clean and remove both ends of the can.

Cut the paper to be the same height as the can or slightly shorter. When we hang the hotel, the can will hang from its side, so shorter rolls ensure the paper is inside the metal and protected from the rain.

Wrap a piece of paper around the pencil, making at least 5 layers, then hold the paper in place with a piece of tape, so it doesn't unroll. Slide the paper off the pencil and set your roll aside.

Continue to make your rolls so that you'll have enough to fill the can completely.

2. Put everything together:

Put enough string through the length of the can so that you can hang up your bee hotel and tie the ends together.

Place the paper rolls into the can, filling it completely, so no rolls fall out.

3. Place it in your yard:

Choose a location for your bee hotel. It needs to be about a metre off the ground and in an open, sunny spot. Facing east is best.

4. Observe:

Over the next couple of months, watch for mason bees moving into their new home.

Mason bees will use this hotel as a nest to lay their eggs. Look out for "doors" made of mud; this is how the bees seal their nests.

Are you noticing more bees in your yard now that a new home has been made?

How does it work?

You've just created a home for mason bees! This species is also known as solitary bees because they don't live with a queen in a big hive but instead live alone.

They are peaceful bees and important pollinators, so encouraging them to live in your backyard will mean more flowers and crops. Avoid using chemical pesticides, which will harm the bees.

Mason bees are smaller than honeybees and are metallic blue, so keep an eye out for your new friends!

