

# Building a pollinator nest.

As land is cleared to build houses or shopping centres, we remove natural wildlife habitat. We can, however, provide additional nesting space for bees, to help them find a safe place to rear their offspring. Different bees like different nesting substrate. About 30% of native bees naturally nest in pre-existing cavities and will nest in man-made substrate. These include resin bees, leaf-cutter bees, masked bees and reed bees.

**The simplest nest** is a bundle of hollow and pithy stems. Cut them to about 200 mm long, wire them together at each end, and hang them in a tree or on a fence. Reed bees and masked bees will nest in the smallest of holes, from just 3mm in diameter.



**The hardwood nesting block** is drilled with a variety of different sized holes, between 3 and 8mm in diameter. The longer you can drill the holes the better but try to drill them to a depth of at least 100mm, if possible. For the largest holes (6–8mm) it is recommended that you use an 'auger' bit when working with hardwood. Drill a large hole in the top rear corner, insert a sturdy length of wire and hang it from a tree or desking. It can also be free-standing, but not on the ground.



**The most complex nest** is made of a container filled with a mix of materials. Find or make a small box, at least 100mm deep. Be aware, the larger the box, the more nesting materials you will need to find to fill it. 15 x 15cm inside diameter is a good size. Back it with plywood or fine mesh, to stop materials falling through. Cut 1–3 blocks of wood (not treated) to a length of 100mm and drill with a variety of holes. Cut hollow and/or pithy stems to fit the depth of the box. Bundle with wire or elastic bands for ease of handling. Add layers or roles of bark, rotten wood. Pack the box tightly with the materials, so the openings are facing out. Close the front of the box using wire mesh, with a gauge no smaller than 10mm (to allow insects to enter), using a staple gun or tacks. Hang the nest with hooks and wire or keep it as a free-standing nest, not on the ground.



## We need bees.

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