



Activity time:  
More than 2 hours



Suitable for:  
Balcony/roof, Small garden, Large garden, Medium garden



To help:  
Bees



Difficulty level:  
Medium

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### Offer solitary bees five-star accommodation with an easy-to-make hotel.

Solitary bees aren't like honeybees that live in hives. As their name suggests, they make their nests on their own and lay their eggs in tunnels, such as in dead wood or hard soil. A bee B&B mimics these conditions.

You can make your bee B&B whenever the mood takes you, but spring is when potential residents are queuing up for the best new abode.

Sit and watch adult female bees find the nest on sunny days in spring. You'll know they're nesting if you see them flying in with pollen (some carry it on their bellies), with blobs of mud to create cell walls along the tube, or with bits of leaf (these are the leaf-cutter bees).

Are you doing this activity as part of your [personal plan](#)? Either take a look at your progress or create your own [easy-to-follow personal plan](#) to help you give nature a home where you live.

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## What you will need

Offcuts of planks of wood 1.5cm thick

Saw

Nails

Drill

Brown paper

Pencil

Sticky tape

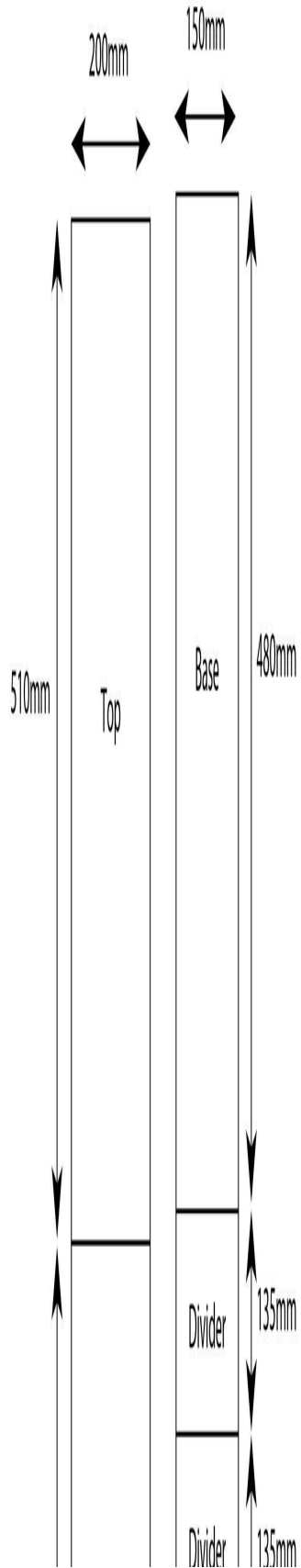
Bamboo canes

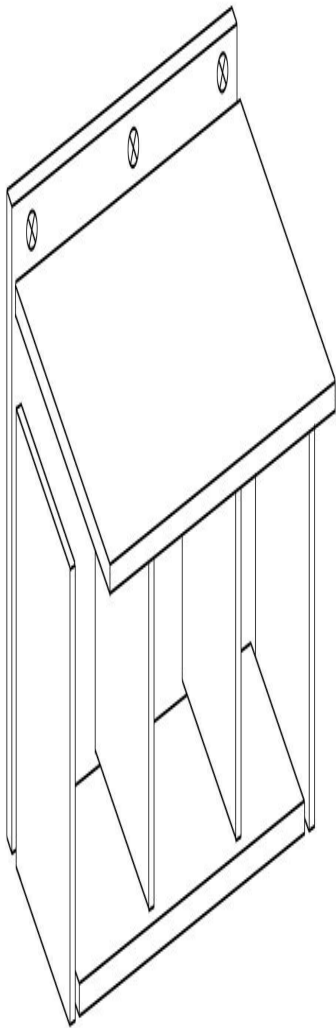
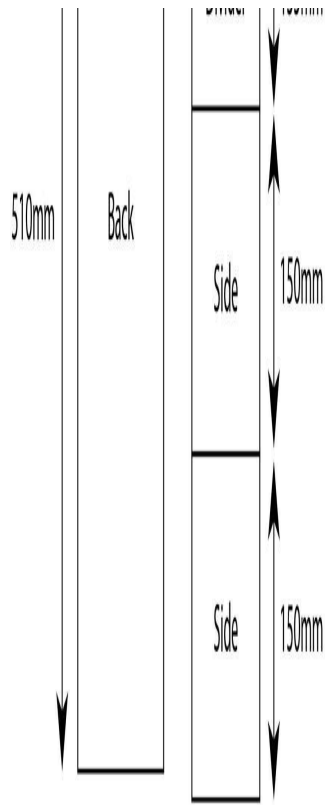
Hollow plant stems

Reeds

Chunks of untreated hardwood or logs

# Step-by-step guide





1. **A box of holes:** In a nutshell, you will make or buy a box or container stuffed full of different-sized hollow tubes, which each have a 'dead end' and are 15 cm or so long.

You can get really creative with your materials and designs; just make sure your masterpiece is robust enough to stay outdoors for several years.

Buying a ready-made bee hotel is the easy way to do it if you don't have the time or the right tools. Choose one with several different sizes of tubes – different species of bee like different diameter tunnels.

- 2. Make your bee B&B.** We've come up with a simple design for you to try, but if you are nifty with carpentry, feel free to make your own. For our version, buy a plank of timber (with the FSC logo, which means it comes from a sustainable source) about 1.5 cm thick and cut into the shapes shown to make a box with three compartments. Nail it together. If you make your own, make sure it is 15 cm deep and the roof has a good overhang to keep off the rain. How you design your roof depends on your carpentry prowess. You can turn it vertically, give it a pitched roof or make it in the shape of St Paul's Cathedral! Please send us your pictures.

**Note:** *the dimensions shown are for 15mm thick wood. If your wood is different to that, the dimensions of the Base should be 510mm minus 2 x thickness of the wood, and the side pieces should be 135mm + thickness of wood.*



- 3. Create the nesting tubes.** You can buy proper bee tubes, or find the dead stems of hollow plants and reeds. Cut your various tubes to 15cm length. The easiest way is to drill deep holes of varying sizes (between 2-6mm diameter) into blocks of wood and logs, again about 15cm deep (angle them slightly upward so the rain doesn't get in).

Fill your box up with your tubes and blocks of wood. Squeeze all the tubes in together so they stay put. You'll find it's easier to wedge things into a box divided into compartments than if it was one big box.



- 4. Position your box.** Fix it firmly at about waist or chest height (bees don't want to wave around in the wind), maybe on a fence or wall. Very importantly, place it facing south in a sunny position, near your bee-friendly flowers and shrubs.
- 5. Now watch for adult female bees** visiting the nestholes on sunny days in spring and summer. You'll know they're nesting if you see them flying in with pollen (some carry it on their bellies), with blobs of mud to create cell walls along the tube, or with bits of leaf (these are the leaf-cutter bees).

You'll be able to see if any of the holes have been used because the holes will be blocked with plugs of mud or leaves. The mother bees will lay eggs in those cells, leave them a supply of pollen and nectar 'babyfood', and then their work is done. The bee grubs will grow up in their tubes and hatch the next year to start life's cycle over again.

