

Backyard Species Discovery – Weekly Challenge

Week 6

Build a native bee hotel

The Backyard Species Discovery project is a virtual expedition to continue adding to our knowledge of Australian biodiversity while field work is still difficult due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

In addition to adding observations to iNaturalist, the Backyard Species Discovery project encourages Australians to learn about the importance of biodiversity and explore ways to improve and protect it.

Here is your challenge:

To prepare for increased native bee activity in spring our Week 6 Challenge is to Build a Native Bee Hotel. Many solitary and semi-social native bees nest in cavities above the ground, however much of their habitat is being lost so we can help provide alternative homes for them. Send us a photo or video of you making your bee hotel.

Tips:

- It doesn't have to be a big hotel - it can be as simple as drilling holes in a block of untreated, weather-resistant wood, or placing lengths of bamboo in an old food tin as shown in the photo. Other suitable materials include the dried stems of plants such as Lantana, ferns, roses, blackberries, Hydrangea, grapevines and fennel, which could alternatively be secured in a bundle with string or tape.
- If drilling holes in wood, diameters between 3-12mm are best, with most bees preferring diameters around 7mm. Holes should be at least 50mm long but aim for 100-200mm in length.
- Securely fix the block of wood or bundle of stems to a solid surface in a sheltered position.
- Sandra, from our partner Earthwatch Australia, has produced a beautiful video on How to Make a Native Bee Hotel <https://youtu.be/gva5RARebg4>. We also have fact sheets on our website at <https://bushblitz.org.au/resources/>, and native bee researcher Kit Prendergast runs an excellent Facebook group Bees in the Burbs and is quick to answer questions.
- While you won't be able to add your hotel to our Backyard Species Discovery Project on iNaturalist, it should attract some wild visitors that you can add some time in the future!



Due date:

Email your entry with your name (or group name) to bushblitz@awe.gov.au by midnight AEST on Wednesday 22 July.

Applications will be judged by a panel and the winning entry will be announced on Friday 24 July, on the Bush Blitz website and social media platforms.