

Folklore sees in bees and ants symbols of wise industry, selflessness, and prudence.¹



The UK is home to 267 species of bees ranging from the widely recognised Honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) and bumblebees which live in social colonies with a single reproductive queen to over 220 species of solitary bees that live alone in small cavity nests in bare soil, masonry or wood.

Solitary bee diversity in Britain has declined by 52%.²

Mason bees (*Osmia* sp) are far more effective pollinators of most flowering plants including many Rosaceae family plant species we enjoy such as apples, cherries, plums and hawthorns whose blossoming coincides with mating and nesting season.

Honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) might outcompete wild bees by depleting common resources, possibly more so in simplified landscapes where flower-rich habitats have been lost.³

Pollination by insects is thought to be the main reproductive mechanism in 78% of temperate flowering plants⁴ and is essential to maintaining plant genetic diversity that all life on earth depends.

Bees are subject to numerous pressures in the modern world. The abundance and diversity of flowers has declined, bees are chronically exposed to cocktails of agrochemicals, and they are simultaneously exposed to novel parasites accidentally spread by humans. Climate change is likely to exacerbate these problems in the future.⁵



Step by step guide to creating bee homes and habitats

Forage regeneratively* in parks, green spaces or gardens to gather up hollow dead woody plant stalks and stems, ideal species commonly include Bamboo, however many others also work well such as Elder (*Sambucus* sp), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Miscanthus, Sedum, Bramble (*Rubus* sp), Common reed (*Phragmites australis*), Lesser Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Angelica and many many more.

Cut stems cleanly into 10 to 12 cm lengths and gather the cut stems together and fixed into a wooden frame, alternatively a reused tin or plant pot can hold them perfectly in a circle. Ensure they are tightly packed so they remain fixed in place and birds don't peck them. If birds are a problem they may predate the nests, a wire mesh can be securely fixed over the entrance.

Many wild bee species such as the Mason bee will nest in these stems between early spring and mid summer laying eggs at intervals through the empty stems.

Each egg is laid in an individual cell of clay soil and plant matter with a small bed of pollen and nectar providing an instant food source for the larval stage young offspring.

The female Mason bees will plug the end with muddy clay soil to protect the larvae, they find wet muddy clay from ponds or bogs so try to ensure there is a regular water supply to an area of garden such as a bog garden or pond in times of dry weather.

Mason bees take ten months to develop from egg to adult.

Male mason bees emerge first and are laid closest to the entrance of the cavity, a week later females emerge for mating to begin, shortly after mating the male dies and the female finds a new nest to lay her eggs.

Parasites such as pollen mites and parasitic wasps can potentially cause problems, these can be minimised by cleaning out old tubes or replacing them every season after the bees have flown the nest in April.

Drilled log homes

Find a solid and dry log or piece of wood with a depth of around 12cm, avoid any treated or painted wood.

Using a powered drill with the longest drill bit you can find, ideally between 6cm and 10 cm and using varying size widths of drill bits between 2mm and 10mm.

Drill a series of holes as close as 2cm apart but the spacing can be wider, these are the cavity nesting holes where the female solitary bee sleeps and lays her eggs.

Place on a sunny but sheltered spot facing south at least a meter from the ground, ideally with a covering roof to keep the nest dry from the rain.

Bees are cold blooded and rely on the warmth of the sun to wake up and become active.



The miners and Ground nesters

There are 67 species of ground nesting or mining bee (*Andrena* sp) in the UK.

To support their nesting needs leave an open and partially sunny patch of bare soil using a low nutrient subsoil or sand in your garden or allotment, this can be covered in sand to remain relatively weed free. This will be a nesting niche* habitat for mining bee nests who in turn will help to aerate the soil and nest in excavated tunnels.

Ground nesting Bee species such as the Ivy mining bee (*Colletes hederæ*) are active later in the summer and autumn primarily living off the pollen and nectar of the flowering Ivy (*Hedera helix*) so leave any Ivy to flower as an important food source for them and other pollinators.

**Leaf-cutting and Mason Bees: FAMILY
Megachilidae; 18 species in the UK**

**Pollenivorous and nectarivorous; wood or
soil nesting**

**150 leaf-cutters do the pollination work of
3,000 honeybees**

Artwork by Ruzha Kazanjieva





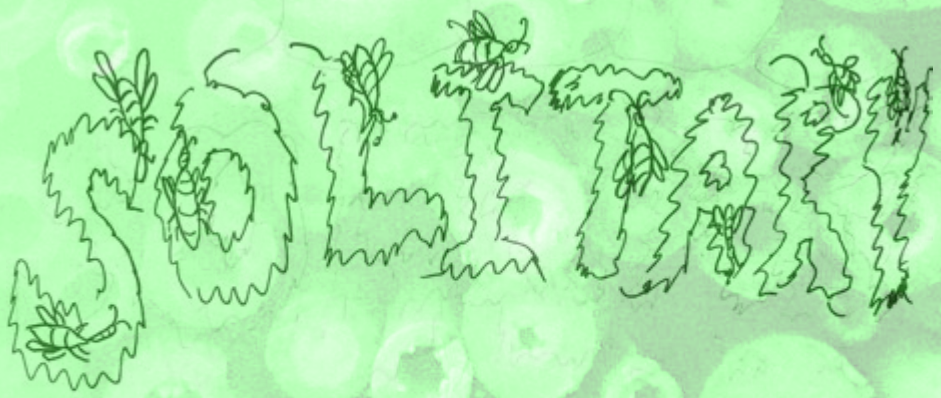
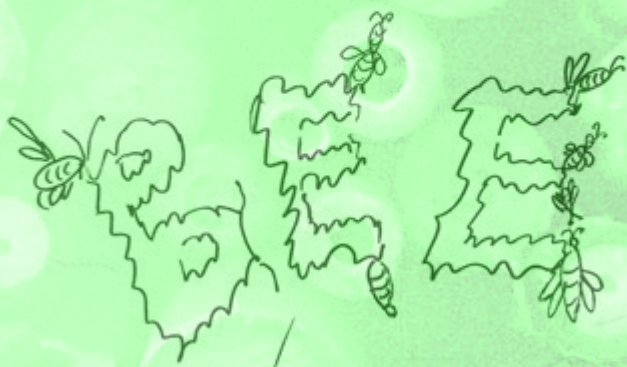




Plant Lambs Ears (*Stachys byzantina*) for Wool Carder Bees who line their nests with the woolly silky fur like coating, it is also rich in nectar

Plant poppies (*Papaver* sp) for the Poppy bee (*Osmia papaveris*) who lines their cavity nests with cut out parts of poppy petals.

The anthropological notion of technology valued the hand as the natural tool from which artificial creation stems. Human history was the history of labor, in which work was one mode of activity, but only conscious activity was work. Hence, for animals work does not exist, even though bees and ants might seem industrious.⁶



Those of us who eschew the herd mentality tend to prefer a frontier mentality in which we imagine our bodies as isolated homesteads that we tend either well or badly.

The health of the homestead next to ours does not affect us, this thinking suggests, so long as ours is well tended. If we were to exchange the metaphor of the herd for a hive, perhaps the concept of shared immunity might be more appealing.

Honeybees are matriarchal, environmental do-gooders who also happen to be entirely interdependent. The health of any individual bee, as we know from the recent epidemic of colony collapse, depends on the health of the hive.⁷

A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells.⁸

Traditional work values those that preach the moral value and dignity of waged work.

They privilege such work as an essential source of individual growth, self-fulfillment, social recognition, and status continue to be effective in encouraging and rationalizing the long hours workers are supposed to dedicate to waged work and the identities they are expected to invest there.⁹

The number of households in the private rented sector in the UK increased from 2.8 million in 2007 to 4.5 million in 2017. (“UK private rented sector: 2018” 2019)¹⁰

Private renting in the UK is broken. Renters desperately need legislative change and at the top of the list is the scrapping of Section 21 (no fault evictions of private tenants). The statistics in this report show that a staggering number of renters are afraid to report issues in their home for fear of losing their home.

Alongside scrapping Section 21, the government must also legislate to stop landlords and agencies from imposing rent hikes other wise they could raise the rent to an unaffordable amount after a complaint and force tenants out this way. It would be Section 21 by the back door.¹¹

A quarter of private renters - equivalent to 2.8 million people – are constantly struggling to pay their rent, an increase of 24% compared to the same period last year. More than two thirds (69%) of private renters – equivalent to 7.7 million people – would struggle to find a suitable home this winter if they were evicted.

We want to transform the housing system so that everyone has access to an affordable, secure and decent home. We want a future where we have more free time because housing is cheaper, where working-class people and migrants aren't pushed to the fringes, and where no-one has to suffer evictions or homelessness.

**Housing for people not profit
End the politics and culture of property as investment rather than to house people and bring homes into democratic public ownership.¹²**

***Glossary**

Niche the "needs" niche, or an area or habitat that meets the ecological requirements for a particular organism's survival

Regeneratively by selectively and creatively weeding, cutting back, pruning and harvesting we mimic large herbivorous species that create certain disturbances required by some species

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