



Three Sisters is a social enterprise founded by three women passionate about native gardens and plants. Three Sisters create pollinator-friendly gardens for private homeowners and businesses. We also create earth friendly skin care products, and Pollinator habitat, like bee houses. A portion of all of our proceeds go to Peterborough Pollinators, a citizen-led initiative committed to building pollinator pathways through the city of Peterborough.

For more information on Three Sisters
visit our Facebook page:
[ThreeSisters.Ptbo](https://www.facebook.com/ThreeSisters.Ptbo)
and for Peterborough Pollinators:
[PtboPollinators](https://www.facebook.com/PtboPollinators).
or contact us at
705-957-0784

Bee Houses

habitat for our local pollinators



Why Bee Houses

By providing urban homes for our native bee population, you are playing an important role in supporting the declining pollinator population. Bees are some of our best pollinators and they are critical for growing the next generation of plants, and food for both humans and other animals.

There are about 300 wild bee species, native to Eastern Canada, that are important pollinators. These bees, known as "Solitary" bees, travel only up to 500m between their home and their food sources. This means that an important part of supporting your local pollinator population is to ensure that they not only have plenty of nutrition, but also a place to live.

Some Solitary bees nest in the ground or in holes in wood, such as those made by wood borers, or in handmade bee houses. 85% of all bees are "Solitary." They are called this because they do not live in hives and do not have a Queen. Instead they nest in their holes, one female per hole, and will live alongside other bees. Some of these species include - Orchard Mason bees Leafcutter bees, Aphid bees and Carpenter bees. We have created your bee house to accommodate a variety of bee species.

Placement

The bee house should be positioned in **full sun**, facing south east or south, at least a meter off the ground, without any trees or plants obscuring the entrances to the tunnels. Solitary bees are cold-blooded and rely on the sun's heat to warm them up in the morning, hence the need for a sunny site. Unlike bumblebees, they do not have any furry coats to keep themselves warm! Also, your bee house must be **firmly fixed**, so that it does not swing or sway in the wind.

What to look for

Bee activity will cease by mid-September at the latest; and earlier for Mason Bees. Inside the tubes and tunnels, each cell will have been provisioned with a mixture of pollen and nectar by the mother bee and a tiny egg may have been laid. The egg soon hatches and the larva develops rapidly by eating the nutritious mixture of pollen and nectar. The larvae then pupate. Orchard Bees (*Osmia*) will spend the next 11 months or so in a dormant state as pupae, inside a cocoon, until they are ready to emerge as adult bees the following spring or summer. Some other solitary species such as Carpenter Bees spend most of this period as fully-formed but dormant adults.

Care and Maintenance

For your bee house to be most effective, it should be maintained on an annual basis. At the end of summer, you will need to clean out any cells that remain in a walled-up condition from the previous year because no young bees emerged. The contents of these cells will be dead and should be removed and destroyed. Every two years, again in the summer after the young bees have emerged, replace drilled blocks with brand new ones. It will help to prevent the build-up of fungus, moulds, mites and other pests and parasites.

Protect your bee house during the winter months – keep it in a **dry, cool place in winter** and bring it out in March. This is very important – winter wet, not cold, can destroy their homes. . Do not store in a warm place – they need to be cold but **protected from persistent heavy rain** during the winter. From April onwards, young bees that have over-wintered in a dormant state inside the tunnels will emerge, and start the cycle over again.