

## Making your bee hotel

A number of bee hotel designs are available to buy, but they are also simple to make using the following materials for nest cavities:

- ✓ cut bamboo canes;
- ✓ drilled logs or untreated wood;
- ✓ paper/cardboard straws;
- ✓ dead hollow stems (e.g. Teasels, Reeds, Elder).

These are best stacked inside a water-resistant frame (untreated timber or plastic), or can simply be fastened in a bundle.

Use entrance hole diameters of 2-10mm to attract a range of bee species.



© Jo Loman



© Scarlet Weston

## Siting your bee hotel

Your bee hotel should be:

- ✓ In full sun, in a south-facing position;
- ✓ Securely fastened at least a meter off the ground;
- ✓ Kept clear of plants or other obstructions.

## Maintaining your bee hotel

- ✓ Check that your bee hotel is staying dry. Repair or replace it if necessary.
- ✓ Ideally, replace drilled logs or wooden blocks every two years, before spring, to prevent the build up of parasites which can reduce the bee's nesting success; leave any with signs of nesting.
- ✓ Take unroofed bee hotels (e.g. tied bundles of canes or straws) inside to a cool, dry place overwinter to keep them dry and prevent fungal infection. Return them outside after the frosts.



© Amy Crawford



## Mason and leafcutter bees

### Red Mason Bee

*Osmia bicornis*

Found from April-June  
(12mm)

Body covered in bristly orange hairs, with a large black head. Males have white hairs on the face and especially long antennae.

Builds nest cells with mud walls and plugs the nest hole with mud when finished.



© grandaded

A very common resident of bee hotels.



© Suzanne Burgess



Build nest cells and entrance plugs out of chewed leaves.



© Claire Pumfrey

### Blue Mason Bee

*Osmia caerulea*

Found from April-June  
(7-8.5mm)

A small, glossy bee with bristly hairs. Females are black, often tinged with blue, with pale hairs.

Males are metallic green/ gold with golden hairs and patterned eyes.

### Leafcutter bees

*Megachile spp.*

Found from May-September  
(12-18mm)

Medium-sized, broad bodied bees with a hairy brown head and thorax. The abdomen is mostly bare and black above, with females having a dense brush of pollen-collecting hairs below.



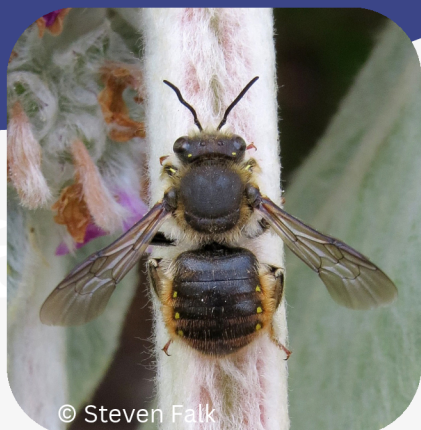
© Bernhard Plank

Females cut sections of leaves with their jaws, which they carry back to the nest.



© Sam Merriman-Johnson





© Steven Falk

## Wool Carder Bee

*Anthidium manicatum*

Found from May-August

(12-16mm)

A chunky black bee with striking yellow markings on the abdomen and a border of pale hairs.

Builds its nest cells and plugs the nest hole using hairs collected from woolly plants (e.g. Lamb's Ear and Mullein).



© Steven Falk

## Sharp-tailed bees

*Coelioxys* spp.

Found from June-August | (6-9mm)

Nest parasites of leafcutter and mason bees. The banded abdomen has a pointed tip for cutting slits through the nest plugs of the host and laying eggs inside.

The larvae feed off the pollen stores gathered by the host bee.



© Steven Falk

## Scissor bees

*Chelostoma* spp.

Found from May-August | (4-8mm)

Small, slender, black bees with almost cylindrical bodies and large heads. The Small Scissor Bee (*C.campanularum*) is one of the UK's smallest bees (4-4.5mm) The Large Scissor Bee (*C.florisomme*) grows to 8mm and has distinctive forward-pointing jaws. Females build their nest cells and plug the entrance with mud and sand grains.



© Steven Falk

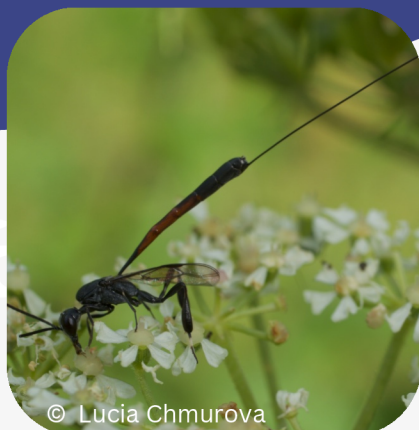
## Masked or yellow-face bees

*Hylaeus* spp.

Found from May-September

(4-4.5mm)

Small, black and almost hairless. Males have a pale yellow 'face mask'. Females have a pair of yellow markings near the eyes. Easily mistaken for a solitary wasp, especially since the females carry pollen in their crop rather than on body hairs. The Common Masked Bee (*Hylaeus communis*) is the most frequent in bee hotels.



© Lucia Chmurova

### Wild Carrot Wasp *Gasteruption jaculator*

Found from May-September  
(10-18mm)

A long, slender, delicate-looking wasp with black and red colouration.

The female has a strikingly long ovipositor (egg-laying tube) which she uses to drill through the plugs of mason bee and solitary wasp nests and lay eggs inside.



© Claire Pumfrey

### Mason wasps

*Eumeninae spp.*

Found from June-September | (10-13mm)

Striking black and yellow wasps. Appear similar to social wasps but with a broad, black band on the abdomen and a mostly black head. Build nest cells and plugs out of mud. The female stocks the nest with caterpillars she has paralysed with her sting as food for her larvae.



© Sam Merriman-Johnson

### Jewel wasps

*Chrysididae spp.*

Found from April-September | (<10mm)

Small, brightly-coloured metallic wasps. Females lay their eggs inside the nests of other solitary wasps and solitary bees where their young feed on the food stores and the larvae of the hosts.



© Steven Falk

### White-spotted Sapyga *Sapyga quinquepunctata*

Found from May-July  
(7-12mm)

A small slender wasp coloured black and red with white spots on the abdomen and with long-thick antennae. Males lack the red band. Females lay their eggs inside the nests of mason bees.