

# Native Bees - Habitats and Nesting Requirements

## **Bumble bees**

Abandoned mouse nests, other rodent burrows, upside down flower pots, under boards, and other human-made cavities. A new queen mates in fall and is the only bumble bee to overwinter in hibernation. In spring the queen awakens and starts a new colony. Our only true social native bee that produces worker bees for the hive. Bumblebees can forage in cooler weather than honeybees, even flying in light rain.

## **Digger Bees**

Sandy soil, compacted soils, bank sides. Are usually active in the morning hours but can be seen other times.

## **Squash bees**

Sandy soil, may nest in gardens (where pumpkins, squash and gourds are grown) or garden pathways. They are early risers and can be found in pumpkin patches before dawn. Males often sleep in the wilted flowers.

## **Sweat bees**

Bare ground, compacted soil, sunny areas not covered by vegetation. Like most bees, sweat bees forage for pollen earlier in the morning and then for nectar later.

## **Plasterer or Cellophane bees**

Bare ground, banks or cliffs. Can be active in morning or later in the day. Often many nests found in same area.

## **Mining (Adrenid ) bees**

Sunny bare ground, sandy soil, under leaf litter or in soil on banksides and cliffs. Active in spring and most commonly seen on flowers during morning hours when pollen and nectar resources are abundant.

## **Mason bees (Orchard bees)**

Use pre-existing tunnels of various diameters in dead wood made by emerging beetles. Man-made and commercially sold nesting houses can spread disease and parasites if not managed properly. Xerces.org has a fact sheet on proper management of bee houses and blocks. Good maintenance requires considerable time and effort. Providing natural nesting habitat such as logs and snags is a safer and better option for our tunnel-nesting bees. Mason bees are generally more active in morning hours.

## **Leafcutter bees**

Pre-existing circular tunnels of various diameters in dead but sound wood created by emerging beetles; rarely nest in the ground. Leave dead limbs and trees to support them and other wildlife. Leafcutter bees can be seen foraging throughout the day even in hot weather.

## **Large Carpenter bees**

Excavate soft dead wood of poplar, cottonwood or willow and untreated structural timbers including redwood. Depending on the species, there may be one or two brood cycles per year. These bees can be active all day even in extremely hot weather. Carpenter bees are extremely important pollinators.

## **Small Carpenter bees**

Pithy stems including roses and blackberry canes. Most active in the morning but can be found at other times.

## **Yellow-faced bees**

Nest in dead stems along forest edges. Forage many floral resources and most active during morning hours.