

# Create your own bee hotel

Britain's bees are in trouble. 35 UK bees' species are under threat of extinction, and all species face serious threats. Right now, they need us almost as much as we need them.

The decline in bees' diversity and abundance would have a serious impact on how our natural world functions. This includes our food crops. Bees pollinate much of the food that makes our diets healthy and tasty – from the apple in our lunchbox, to the tomatoes on our pizza. There are lots of ways to make a bee hotel. The simplest method is to use an old plastic bottle stuffed with lengths of twigs and stems.

## Collect nesting materials

You can find bamboo in garden centres. For hollow reeds, grasses, or stems like cow parsley, try your local park. Different species of bee need holes from 2 to 10mm, so aim for a range of sizes. Make sure your materials are dry before starting.

## You'll also need:

- 2 litre plastic bottle
- Sandpaper
- Craft knife and cutting mat
- Strong twine, about 1 metre long
- Garden clippers or secateurs
- Modelling clay (optional)

1. With a craft knife, cut both ends off the plastic bottle to create a cylinder.
2. Make your lengths of bamboo, grass or reeds 3 cm shorter than the bottle to protect them from rain – use sharp garden clippers to trim them. Bees can't burrow through the knots in bamboo, so avoid lengths with too many knots.
3. Use sandpaper to smooth the ends of the bamboo or reeds if uneven. Bees will be put off by sharp edges barring entry to the holes.
4. Use modelling clay or wax to block the rear of completely hollow canes – and to help secure the stems and bamboo in place.
5. Before filling it completely, thread a length of strong twine through the bottle, so you can hang up the finished hotel.
6. Add more bamboo and reeds until the bottle is tightly packed and secure.



## Where to put a bee hotel

A bee hotel is best placed in full sun, facing south or south east. Your bee hotel must be at least a metre off the ground, with no vegetation blocking the entrance. Try to keep it dry at all times to prevent the contents going mouldy. You may need to move your bee hotel in the autumn and winter to protect the nesting bees. If it's difficult to site your hotel in a well-protected – rainproof spot – move it into a garden shed or similar. Basically, place it somewhere dry and unheated. Do this from October to February, and then put it outside again in March.

Find out more at <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/bees/make-a-bee-house>

