##

**Caring for your Solitary Bee box**

**Your bee box - specification**

The bee box is made from natural materials which are breathable and allow the movement of air and moisture, so not encouraging damp and condensation which lead to fungus and mould. The bamboo canes have been commercially prepared for Bees to ensure they are smooth and free of splinters.

The nesting box has a solid back as bees will not use those that are open both front and back. The depth of the box is 150mm minimum and they provide holes of between 2-10mm in diameter.

There is a small ‘roof’ overhang to help keep them rain-proof and prevent them getting damp.

**Siting your bee box -** to maximise the chances of your bee nest box being occupied, careful siting is important.

Position your nest box in a sunny position so preferably facing south east/west not north. Place the nest box at least 1 metre from the ground in a quiet area, in a stable, fixed position that will not be blown in the wind or knocked or dislodged

You can place your nest box near flowering shrubs or flowers but ensure that no vegetation will obscure or shade the nest entrances. It’s useful to think where your early flowering shrubs etc are for when the baby bees hatch and bees wake up after the winter

**Managing Your Bee box**

Bring your nest box into an unheated shed or garage in the late Autumn to protect it from damp and wet weather (a porch or covered area will also do). The bees will be in the tubes in their cocoons ready to emerge in the late Spring (March onwards) when you put the box back outside

Maintenance and cleaning will result in a more successful nesting box and a healthier population of bees in your garden. Fungi, debris and parasites tend to build up over time which can be damaging to the bees. It’s useful to clean the box every 12-18 months in the late spring time after the bees have left

To facilitate this, each of the bee boxes has a back plate that can be removed by simply unscrewing the screws. Use the wooden skewer to clean out the tubes

If you notice birds attacking your nest box or removing nest tubes to get the bee cocoons you can place a piece of mesh or chicken wire across the front.

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