

EALT Bee Hotel Workshops

As part of our Protecting Pollinators program, the Edmonton and Area Land Trust offers bee hotel building workshops. Bee hotels provide artificial nesting sites for solitary bees, which can supplement their habitat in areas where natural habitat is hard to find. We offer two types of workshops: Volunteer workshops, where participants build hotels and donate them to EALT, or facilitated workshops, where participants pay for the bee hotel kits and take them home.

Background:

In a rapidly changing world, the critical importance of pollinators to both the environment and food security is becoming increasingly evident. Many of our food crops require pollination by insects, as do the native plants that wildlife rely on for food and cover. Community and backyard gardens, as well as local farms, are gaining popularity as more people seek to produce and consume local, sustainably sourced food. Pollinators are essential to both sustainably produced local food and the healthy functioning of native ecosystems.

Some flowering plants that produce our food are pollinated by wind or water, but about 3/4 of all the flowering plants in the world rely on insect pollinators to reproduce. Pollinators include bats and birds, but the majority are insects – butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, and especially bees. Alberta is home to over 300 species of native bees, most of which are solitary bees. Solitary bees are also very efficient pollinators!

However, pollinators are declining for a number of reasons, including habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, pesticide use, and climate change.

To help our urban bees, you can build a bee hotel! Bee hotels attract tunnel-nesting solitary bees and other solitary pollinators, which lay their eggs in the tunnels of the hotel. This is especially valuable in areas where native nesting habitat, such as decaying old wood, is less available. Find more information and instructions for how to build your own hotel, at: <https://www.ealt.ca/protecting-pollinators>

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Workshop Details:

- Time:
 - Our workshops are scheduled for 2 hours, which includes a 20 minute presentation at the beginning and up to 1.75 hours for assembly. Some people may not need this much time.
 - We prefer to have 1 hour for set up if possible. We do not need as much time for take down.
- Number of people:
 - We can accommodate up to 20 people per workshop.
 - We require a **minimum of 10 kits be purchased**, equalling the amount of \$400 (\$40 per kit).
- Venue:
 - The venue for the event is typically provided by the host.
 - We require access to the venue 30 minutes before the presentation and workshop begins for set-up.
 - We recommend the space have chairs for the presentation portion of the workshop and tables for the workshop itself. Note that if the venue is carpeted, more cleanup may be required.
 - The workshop includes a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation at the beginning to educate the audience about pollinators and explain the assembly process. We can provide a projector if needed.
- Time of year:
 - Workshops can be held at any time during the year, and the bee hotels can also be placed outside at any time of year, but bees generally start nesting in early spring.
 - Please note that our schedule may be limited in the spring and summer months as we are busy caring for our conservation lands.
- What to bring:
 - Participants must bring their own cordless drill with charged batteries, unless the host can provide enough for each person.
 - Participants should also bring a set of regular drill bits and a set of screwdriver bits.
 - Participants should wear comfortable shoes and clothes for standing and moving around.
 - We provide the rest of the materials.
- Cost:
 - We charge \$40 per bee hotel kit. If the completed hotels are being donated to EALT as part of a volunteer workshop there is no cost.
 - Two or more people may work on a bee hotel together.
- Skill:
 - Bee hotel workshops are suitable to any skill level, provided the individual is comfortable using a cordless drill.
- Age:
 - This workshop is best suited to adults and older children (6 years and up). Older children should work with an adult. Teens are welcome to make their own, as long as they are comfortable using a drill.