

Pollinator Houses

As our weather is starting to warm up, you might have noticed some bees flying around outside. Bees are very important for their roles as pollinators. Pollinators are organisms that transfer pollen from flower to flower. Bees are expert pollinators! In fact, without bees, supermarkets would only have half of the fruits and vegetables there now! Many of our natural crops would not exist without the bees that live in our province! Bees are responsible for the pollination of all our delicious blueberries and cranberries!

Not all bees live in hives or in large groups. There are about 80 different species of bee native to Newfoundland and Labrador, and many of these are solitary, or live alone. These bees often nest in loose ground or small holes.

For this week's activity, let's help these bees that are just waking up after a long winter, and build them some homes!



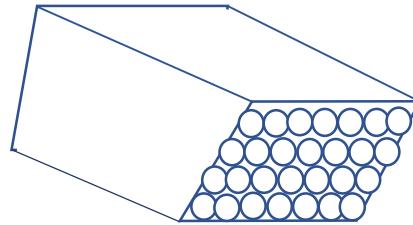
Materials:

- ✿ Construction paper
- ✿ Empty milk carton
- ✿ Zip ties, twine or something with which to tie your bee houses in place
- ✿ Pencil
- ✿ Masking tape
- ✿ Colourful tape, stickers, paint or other decorating materials

What to do:

1. Cut off the top of your milk carton (the side with the spout) so that it is a box with one open side. Cut at a 45-degree angle, so that one side is longer than the other. This long side will be the top of your house, and the overhang will give the bees some protection from the rain.
2. Cut your construction paper so that it is the same length or a little shorter than the length of your milk carton. Roll a piece of construction paper around your pencil, tape the tube of paper closed, and then slip your tube of construction paper off the pencil. Roll the paper just loose enough that your paper tube will come off your pencil. Place this roll in your milk carton.

3. Repeat step 2 until your milk carton is full of paper tubes. The bees will make their homes inside of these paper tubes!
4. Decorate the outside of the milk carton however you want! You could paint it; you could cut out shapes or make stripes with colourful tape; or you could put stickers all over it! Pro-tip: using colourful duct tape, or putting a layer of packing tape over your painted carton will help it hold up a bit better against all the rain we get here in NL.
5. Place your pollinator house outside. The house should be a few feet off the ground, so you will have to attach your house to a tree or fence. You can use zip ties or twine to do this. Try to attach your house as tightly as possible so that it does not swing with the wind. If possible, put your house somewhere close to some flowers that would attract bees, and face the house towards the South or East.



And there you have it! You're helping the bees find somewhere nice to live! Thank you for being an excellent helper to our pollinators!