

June 26, 2009

### TUBE NESTING BEES BOXES AVAILABLE

A graduate student at the University of Nebraska Entomology Department is researching solitary native bees in Nebraska and 4-H is cooperating in the research project. The bees the research is targeting is the solitary nesting bees. They are important for the pollination of native flowers in Nebraska. Many of these bees use preexisting holes in wood to build their nests, but any tubular cavity can serve as a nest site. Last week, in the nature session at 4-H Camp Renegade, we worked with youth from Gage, Jefferson and Saline Counties that learned about and made tube nesting bee boxes.

Solitary native bees are important pollinators of our flowers, vegetables and crops. We can increase the numbers of these vital pollinators by providing nesting cavities. These solitary bees are very docile and do not sting or would do so only if trapped against your body. Native bees would include leaf cutter bees, mason bees, blue orchard bees, halcid bees and others. We have some extra bee boxes from a 4-H project available at the Gage, Jefferson and Saline Extension offices. We are asking for a \$3.00 donation to the 4-H camping program at Camp Jefferson for each box. They will be available while supplies last. Complete information and instructions are available about the bees and placement of the nesting box.

\* Hang the habitat on a nail against a warm, sunny and wind-protected wall under an eave to keep the rain off.

\* Do not hang it in a tree or on a post. The bees will find the blossoms - that is their life's work.

\* In the fall, bring the habitat inside to an unheated outbuilding or even a refrigerator. They want to hibernate in temperatures that average 30 degrees F. Replace the habitat in the spring when the dandelions appear.

\* Emerging bees prefer clean holes in which to nest. Use two nesting habitats, alternating each year. Clean by brushing or re-drilling holes and rinsing with a mild chlorine solution.

For your donation, you receive a template on how to make more boxes yourself. It really is not that hard once you see how they are made. We have a handout that goes along with the boxes that talks about the tube nesting bees, making your own nesting block and providing the best location of the blocks.

Visit our local Extension website to obtain the new handout. A picture of the bee box can be seen on our website at [www.saline.unl.edu](http://www.saline.unl.edu).

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