

DIY BUMBLEBEE CONSERVATION



Bumblebees are one of the most important pollinators in our garden, it's never been more important to conserve and build their habitats. Whilst flowering plants and a supply of nectar and pollen are the main attraction, somewhere suitable to build a nest is just as important, especially due to habitat loss in the natural countryside.

Now thanks to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Hartley Botanic you can learn to build your own nest site using readily available items.

There are around **250 SPECIES** of bumblebee in the world with **24 SPECIES** found right here in the UK

1 LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!



- Bumblebees make their nests at ground level, Unlike the honey and solitary bee
- Find a shaded area, bumblebees don't make their nests in direct sunlight
- Hedges, banks and along fences make perfect spots
- A nest site needs to be within 1km of lots of flowering plants
- Try to find a dry spot

For plants that attract bees refer to this [handy guide](#)

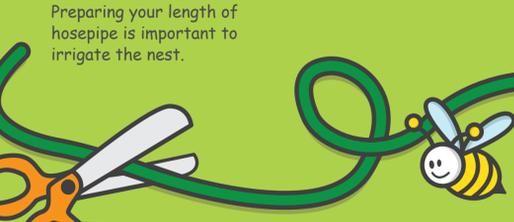
2 WHAT YOU NEED



- 1 Terracotta flowerpot (greater than 20cm in diameter)
- 2 Hosepipe (greater than 18mm in diameter and between 30-50cm long)
- 3 Piece of slate/tile or a matching tray for the flowerpot (this will act as a rain cover for the nest)
- 4 Handful of nesting material (ideally from an old mouse nest)
- 5 Square of chicken wire

3 NEST CONSTRUCTION

Ensure the flowerpot contains holes to allow airflow. If it doesn't, drill some medium sized holes into the roof.

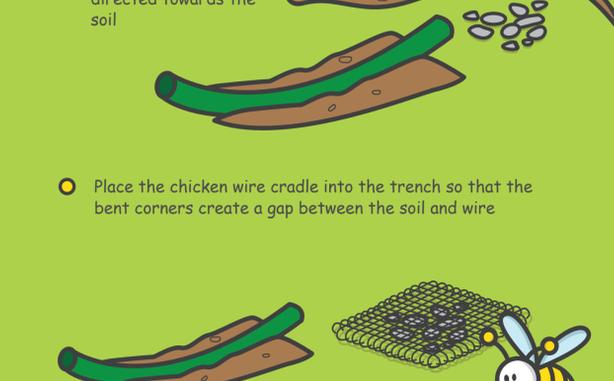


Create your chicken wire cradle, this will help to keep the main nest area, inside the pot, dry.

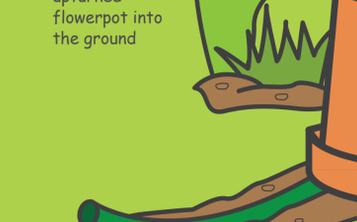
- Cut the square of chicken wire so that it almost covers the mouth of the pot
- Bend the corners down and under, so that the wire fits inside the pot



Preparing your length of hosepipe is important to irrigate the nest.



- Use a nail or skewer to pierce four or five holes into the underside of the hose
- Water passing through the hose should escape and leave the tunnel free for bumblebee access



Prepare the nesting material by either using straw from an existing mouse nest or straw or moss sourced from wild areas.

- The queen bees pick up on the scent of mice and it can give them an indication of a good nest site
- Alternatively dry moss mixed with rodent droppings can create the same effect

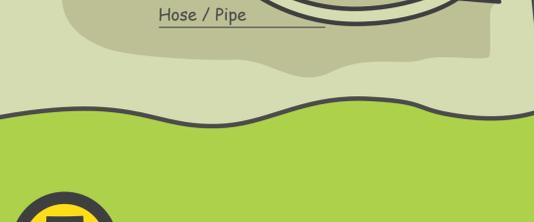


4 PLACING THE NEST

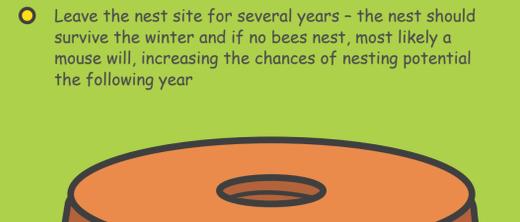
- Dig a small, shallow trench for the flowerpot
- Place the length of hosepipe into the trench with the holes directed towards the soil



- Place the chicken wire cradle into the trench so that the bent corners create a gap between the soil and wire



- Place the nesting material on top of the chicken wire cradle



- Sink the upturned flowerpot into the ground



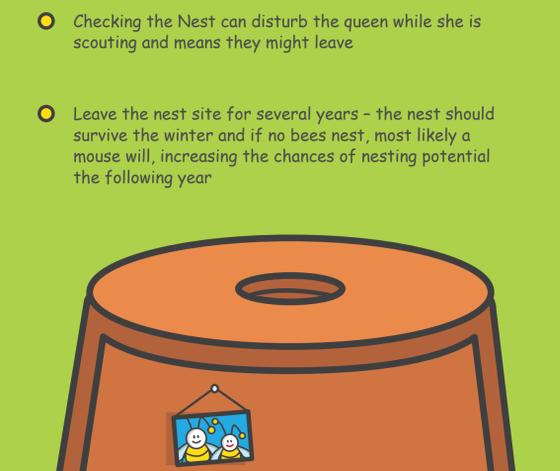
- Cover the hosepipe with soil leaving the end exposed and fill in the remainder of the trench

- Place some small stones on the surface of the flowerpot and then place slate or a tray on top of the pot to prevent water entering the nest

The stones help to circulate air around the nest



- And it's done! Once constructed the nest should look something like this



5 UPON COMPLETION

Leave the nest site alone.

- Checking the Nest can disturb the queen while she is scouting and means they might leave
- Leave the nest site for several years - the nest should survive the winter and if no bees nest, most likely a mouse will, increasing the chances of nesting potential the following year



Once the queen is settled in her nest she will be joined by worker bees who will collect food for the nest and help the queen maintain it.

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust works to support the conservation of bumblebees, raise awareness and help reduce the decline in populations through habitat provision, policy support and public engagement.