

Wooden Tube Hotel

Items required:

- 2-litre plastic bottle
- Untreated bamboo tubes with minimal knots (can be purchased from garden centres) – cut to 12cm and drilled through to make hollow or [purpose made cardboard tubes](#)
- Craft knife
- Scissors
- Clay
- Twine
- Sandpaper

Instructions:

1. Using scissors, cut the top end of the plastic bottle off so that it is 15 cm long.
2. Cut a small hole, using the craft knife, at the lower end of the bottle so that twine can be threaded through to create a loop for hanging.
3. Use sandpaper to smooth the ends of the bamboo if they are uneven as any splinters can damage bees' wings.
4. Push some clay into any tubes that are open ended, to close off one end.
5. Pack the bottle tightly with the hollow tubes until they are all secure.
6. Stand upright for a day so that the tubes can settle into the bottom of the bottle.
7. Fill any gaps with extra tubes and/or other plant material to ensure they cannot fall out.
8. Hang the bee hotel at least a metre off the ground on a warm wall (south or southeast facing) where it will be sheltered from the wind.
9. Try and angle the hotel so that any rain will run off the bottle and not into the tubes (entrance facing slightly downwards).
10. Make sure that there is no vegetation obscuring the entrance to the hotel as this will reduce its visibility to bees.

Overwintering

At the end of the season (end of October/beginning of November), the larvae will be cocooned, ready for winter. In order to protect the larvae from harshness of winter and predators like mice and birds, it is best to move the filled bee hotel into a dark box.

For the bees to be able to find their way out, the box needs to have a small exit hole which is a short distance from the nesting tubes. Make sure that the exit hole is facing east or southeast so that emerging bees can warm up on the outside.

Leave another bee hotel nearby that is empty and clean as the bees can then return for the following year.

Cleaning

Once the adult bees have emerged, clean any debris out of the wooden tubes with a pipe cleaner and then dip in a solution of one-part bleach to three parts water for three minutes and then dry. This will help to prevent the spread of disease, however wooden tubes should be completely replaced every two years to prevent the build-up of pathogens.



