

Bee Prepared: Using Invasive Bamboo to Help the Bees

Eagle Scout Project by Andrew Provenzano Troop 204, The Woodlands, Texas

For my Eagle Scout Project, I worked with The Woodlands Township Invasive Species Task Force to remove invasive bamboo from an area along the trails in Grogan's Mill. Many of the bamboo stalks were then repurposed to create solitary bee houses.

Bee Background

When most people think of bees, they think of honeybees which are social bees who live in a hive. However, out of 4,000 species of bees in the United States (20,000 species world-wide!), more than 90 percent are solitary bees, or native bees. Solitary bees are very important pollinators. Most are Ground-Nesting Bees, but 30 percent of solitary bees are Wood-Nesting and Cavity-Nesting Bees. These are the bees that will nest in bee houses.

Fun Facts

Not all bees are yellow and black! Many solitary bees are different colors, including green, blue, black, red and copper.

Solitary bees are gentle and will not sting because they have no hive to protect.

Solitary bees work alone, but they don't mind building their nests close to one another.

Solitary bees out-perform honeybees when it comes to pollinating. Honeybees collect pollen on their legs, but solitary bees let the pollen fall off as they fly around, spreading it to local flowers.

The number of solitary bees is declining, but we can help by providing a suitable nesting habitat for them!

How to Hang the Solitary Bee House

Hang the bee house against a stable fixture such as a fence or tree, three to six feet off the ground, facing south. The location should receive sun in the morning and be near your pollinator garden and a water source. Securing the bee house against a fence is an ideal location, especially if you can provide shelter from rain under a cross beam.

The Process

Scouts and Task Force volunteers worked together to remove invasive Golden Bamboo. After drying, the bamboo was cut and the houses were assembled, using just a few craft supplies and repurposed aluminum cans.

