

## Making a Bumble Bee Hive.

Like their cousins the Honey Bee Bumbles live in a colony too but they tend not to store honey as food and their numbers are smaller. They are of course great for gardeners as they carry out the pollination of a vast range of plants. They are also under threat with numbers reducing across the country so work to help them is very important.

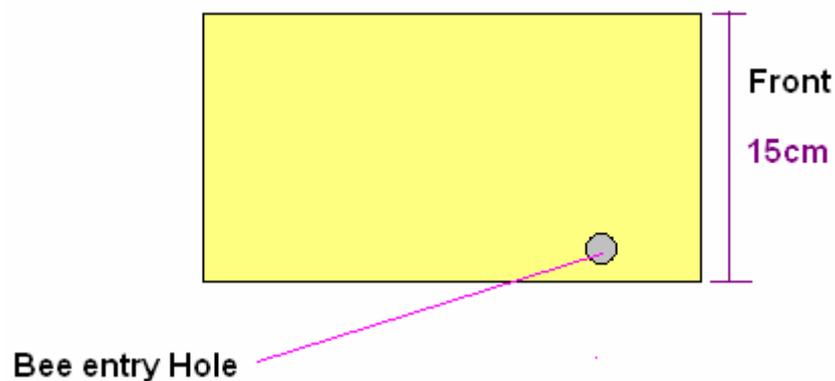
Bumble bees in the wild make use of underground holes and are particularly fond of old mouse holes but we can create a small box that mimics their preferred conditions.

What you will need.

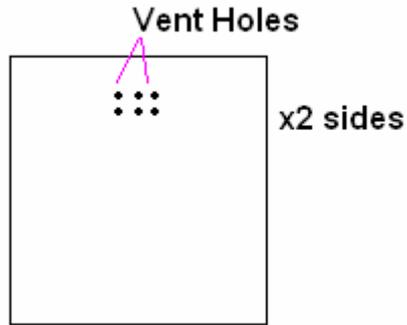
Upholster's Cotton. or insulation material.  
Rough finished plank 15cm X 1cm X 159cm.  
Small piece of mesh or net curtain

Cut the timber to size you will need 4 pieces 15 cm X 30cm. and 3 pieces 15cm X 13cm.

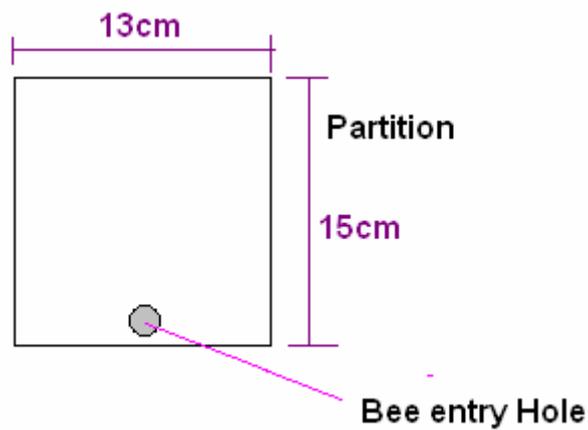
Select one of the 15 X 30 pieces to be the front and drill a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch or 19mm hole as shown below



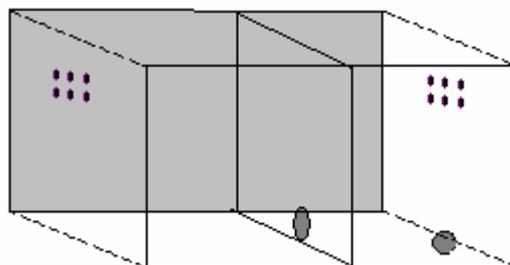
Take two of the 15 X 13 pieces to be the sides or end pieces and drill smaller holes to act as ventilation and then cover with mesh to stop predator access. See below.

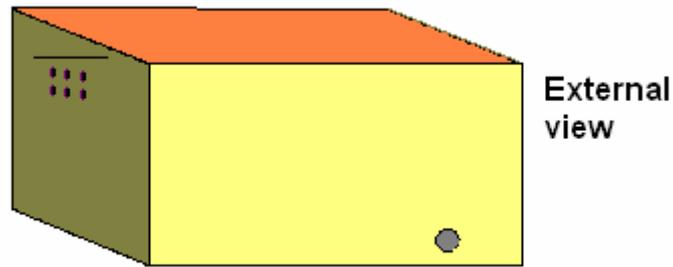


The third piece will form an internal partition and will need a second Bee entry hole drilling of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch diameter.



The box is nailed or screwed and glued together as in the diagram below. The nesting chamber should be at least 13cm by 15cm but can be larger. The bees use the vestibule to clean the nest so this may need cleaning during the winter. Leave the lid loose and use a brick as a weight to hold it down in bad weather. You may want to fit a larger piece of ply to give better weather protection to the nest.





Choose a sheltered, south-facing spot to site bumblebee boxes. It should be warm but out of direct sunlight.

Place bumblebee boxes near a fence, under a hedge or in a flower bed — almost anywhere bumblebees might forage for food. Mice sometimes nest in bumblebee boxes. This can be good for bees the following year, as they may use any nesting material left behind

Further Information.

<http://members.aol.com/beetools/bumble.htm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/animals/wildbritain/gardenwildlife/myspace/content.shtml?28>