



Aussie Bee

Issue 5
February 1998

SHARE OUR VISION...

The Australian Native Bee Research Centre would like *your* help!

MOST Australians, especially in urban areas, have never heard of native bees! Australia's hundreds of native bee species with their rich tapestry of colours, shapes and lifestyles are completely unknown to most city-dwellers. Will you share our vision and help us to bring some native bee species back to urban areas of Australia over the next few years?

Queensland's stingless bee-keepers have developed excellent methods for boxing and propagating our social native bees. This year through the public education programs of the Australian Native Bee Research Centre and *Aussie Bee*, many nests of these social native

bees have already found good homes in the schools, parks and backyards of urban Australia.

However, quite a few colourful species of solitary native bees can also be readily established in artificial nest sites. With your help, these bees, too, could be reintroduced to

urban backyards and to public parks and gardens. Then, when our children are asked about bees, they might be able to tell us from their own experience about the wide variety of Australia's fascinating native bee species!

This summer at the Australian Native Bee Research Centre we set up artificial nest sites for some of our solitary bee species. We began with the *Chalicodoma** resin bees featured on the front cover of this issue. These bees will nest in holes drilled in hardwood timber. So we set out 120 stations around the Australian Native Bee Research Centre each with many drilled holes of various sizes and orientations. Altogether we provided over 1600 drilled holes!

Over the summer months, over 70 of our stations (62%) were used by at least four species of resin bees plus two species of bees from quite a different group: family Colletidae. Over 800 individual nests were built by the bees! We were most surprised and delighted with this strong response as in previous summers we had seen few resin bees on the property — just because you don't see them does not mean they are not there!

We learned a great deal about how to provide natural nest sites



Les Dollin with a timber artificial nest station for *Chalicodoma** resin bees at the Australian Native Bee Research Centre

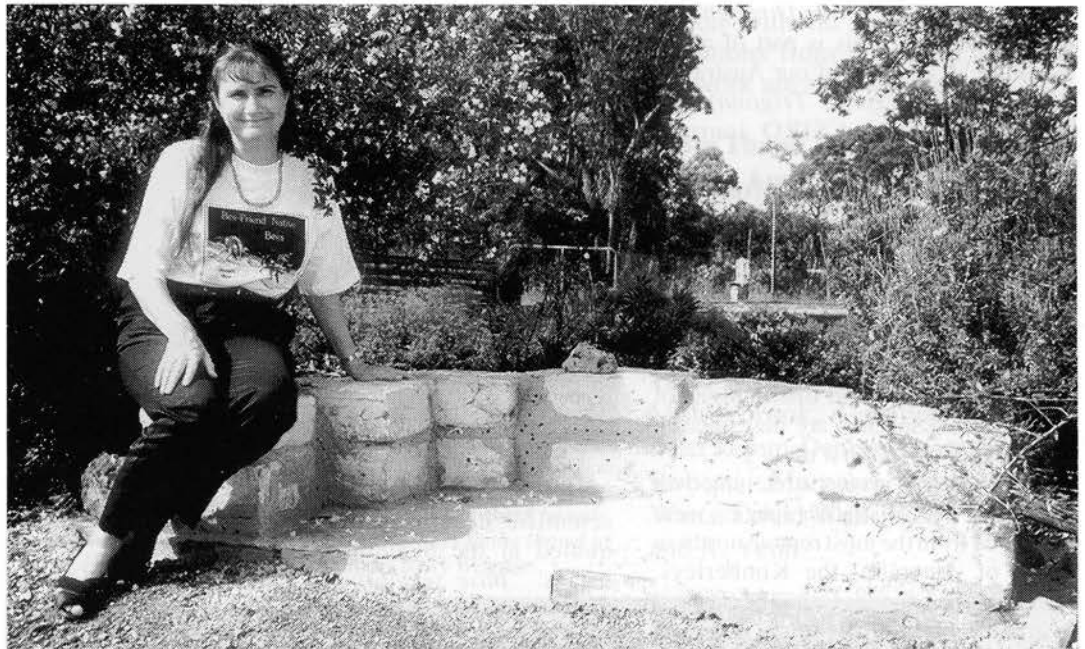


...TO BRING NATIVE BEES BACK TO URBAN AUSTRALIA

for these types of bees, how to meet their needs for food and nesting materials, and how to protect them from predators. In the autumn and next summer we hope to similarly build up some smaller populations of leafcutter bees (*Megachile*), lantana bees (*Exoneura*) and blue banded bees (*Amegilla*) which are also present at the Australian Native Bee Research Centre.





THROUGH *AUSSIE BEE* we would like to share this information with you, our readers, and involve you in building up local populations of bees in your areas. We will provide artificial nest designs and information on how to support and

multiply your own native bees. With your help and participation, knowledge of these methods will increase and we should be able to bring some of these beautiful bees back to the parks and gardens of urban Australia.



Anne Dollin with the foundations of an elaborate nest station for blue banded bees being built out of mud bricks at the Australian Native Bee Research Centre.

How can you help?

-  Keep up to date with the information we distribute in *Aussie Bee* about our many native bee species and their lifestyles and nesting habits.
-  Establish native-bee-friendly flowering plants in your garden to provide food for your new residents — see the on-going results of our plant surveys on page 26. This will help your local native bees, whether or not you are able to provide artificial nest sites for them.
-  If possible, also Bee-Involved by testing out the artificial nesting methods recommended in *Aussie Bee* and letting us know your results — why not start with a timber nest station for resin bees as described on page 5? We need your observations to help build up dependable guidelines for others to use in the future!
-  Support the Australian Native Bee Research Centre's programs through your orders and donations.