



# *BLUE MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY BUILDS A NATIVE BEE HOUSE*

by Megan Halcroft  
University of Western Sydney  
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**T**HE relentless spread of urban development has resulted in the destruction of countless Australian native bee nests. However, the story is not all bad! Community awareness can help to support and build existing populations of native bees.

On Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2012, the Australian Plant Society hosted a special event to promote biodiversity and support local populations of native bees. Over 20 Blue Mountains community members came together to create the first Blue Mountains community native bee house.



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As a local resident and native bee researcher at the University of Western Sydney, I spoke to the group about the beauty and diversity of the native bees in the Blue Mountains region of New South Wales.

There are almost 200 species of native solitary bee in the Sydney and Blue Mountains region. They nest in a variety of substrates including pithy plant stems and old borer holes.

As we beautify our gardens, removing sticks and rotting wood, we remove the natural habitat of our native bees. But we can help, by providing artificial nesting spaces.

With this in mind, the group set about creating a community native bee house from drilled wooden blocks and bundles of sticks.



## Aussie Bee Online

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*Below: Megan Halcroft explained how to make a nest for Exoneura reed bees.*

*Left and below left: Australian Plant Society Workshop participants prepared Exoneura nest bundles for the community native bee house.*



*All the photographs in this article were kindly contributed by Jeannie McInnes*

Visit the website of the Australian Plant Society, Blue Mountains Group:  
[www.apsbluemtnsgroup.org](http://www.apsbluemtnsgroup.org)

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*Left: Megan Halcroft showed the group a completed artificial nest for resin bees. Below: a completed nest bundle for reed bees.*


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Dead lantana and bamboo are ideal nesting sites for species such as *Exoneura* reed bees and leaf cutter bees. So now, we can even recycle our weeds!

The workshop was hosted by the Blue Mountains group of the Australian Plants Society and the bee house was constructed within the grounds of the Glenbrook Native Plant Reserve.

The solitary native bee house will remain in the reserve and become habitat for future populations of native bees. 



For factsheets on making artificial nests for resin bees and reed bees, visit Megan's website:  
[www.beesbusiness.com.au](http://www.beesbusiness.com.au)

For more information and photos of resin bees and reed bees visit the Aussie Bee website:  
[www.aussiebee.com.au](http://www.aussiebee.com.au)

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