

Bumblebees flying at the end of February and early March

When we get warm spells at the end of winter, you will notice big bumblebees slowly flying around.

These are Queens that have woken up from hibernation and are looking for nectar from early flowering plants like Polyanthus, Daffodils and Aconites. When they have got their strength back, they will be looking for somewhere to make a nest.

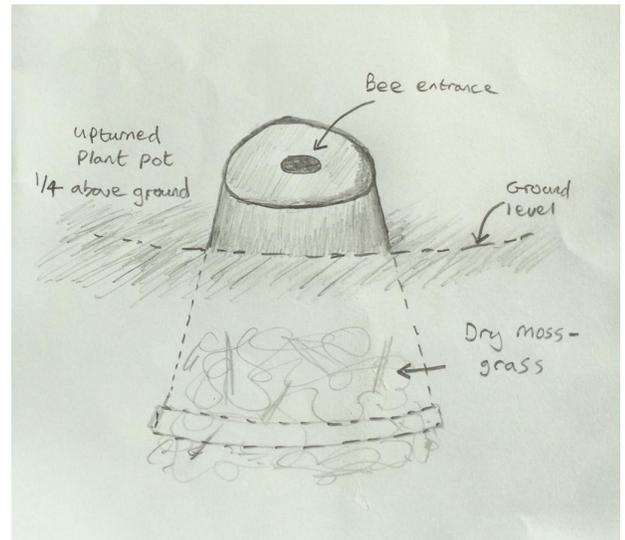
There are several species of Bumblebee; most will be looking to build a nest underground.

You can help them by providing an artificial nesting site. There is no need to worry about bees near the house; they are gentle and harmless unless you actually squeeze them.

Bees are declining for all sorts of reasons, if we can help them we should.

How to make an artificial bee nest

Take a plant pot (about 6 inches across if possible), terracotta is best but plastic will do. Dig a hole in the ground big enough to sink $\frac{3}{4}$ of the pot (large end) below ground level. Fill the pot loosely with dried grass, moss or leaves and place in the ground. Put the earth back so the small drainage hole in the bottom of the pot stands proud of the ground. Its best to site the 'nest' in amongst plants - don't put it in an open space. You can put several around your garden, with luck one will be occupied by a Bumble bee. I had one nesting and I hardly noticed it was there, but they will be working hard pollinating flowers and most importantly fruit trees. They don't produce hundreds of workers like Honey bees and they are not aggressive if you go near the nest.



Do your bit!

It's difficult to stress how important bees are. Every third mouthful of food you eat will have been pollinated by bees. Einstein said 'If we lose the bees, then we will follow'.

So, help save mankind and the planet - make a bee nest!

If you do get a bee to nest take a photo and send to us via email at info@beestonwildlifegroup.org so we can identify the species and tell you more.