

DIRECTIONS

leafcutter **bee**bottle™

LEAFCUTTER BEES | (*Megachile rotundata*) are gentle native bees with extraordinary pollinating abilities. With over 130 species of leafcutter bees native to North America, these bees are essential to the pollination of flowers, vegetables and fruit trees. Leafcutter bees are known as solitary bees because they nest alone. Unlike honey bees, leafcutter bees do not produce honey and do not defend a hive so stinging very rarely happens. If a rare sting should occur, the sting is likened to a mosquito bite. The name "leafcutter" comes from their use of leaves and flower petals to build their nests in gaps, cracks and other small cavities. One leafcutter bee can pollinate what would be comparable to around 20 honeybees.

MOUNTING | The Leafcutter Bee Bottle™ was designed to be modern and minimal in appearance as well as provide the perfect nesting location for your bees. Each cardboard tube will hold five to six eggs and the upcycled beer bottle house keeps the elements at bay. To hang your Leafcutter Bee Bottle™, find an outside spot about 6-8 feet off the ground. Make sure the space is protected from rain and facing south or southeast for maximum sun exposure. Under an eave of a roof or an area protected by limbs of a tree are great locations. A local leaf source of non fibrous leaves, like roses or lilacs, and plenty of nearby blooms will give the bees exactly what they need.

NESTING | During the summer, male bees will hatch first and fly between flowers to feed and the nest waiting for the female bees to hatch. After mating with the hatched females, the male bee's life cycle is complete. The female bees now begin flying between blossoms to feed, collect pollen and search for a suitable nesting spot. Your bottle is the perfect location. To build her nest, the female leafcutter bee will use bits of leaves to build a leaf cell resembling a small cigar. She will then fill a portion of the tube with a pollen/nectar, lay an egg and seal it off with a perfectly measured round cut piece of leaf for the wall.

She will repeat this process for 6-8 weeks, laying 1-2 eggs a day, until the tube is full. She will then cap it and move on to the next open tube to repeat the process. Each trip to collect pollen and nectar is helping to pollinate your green space and neighborhood. The leafcutter bee works within a 300 foot (100 meter) radius from their nesting house.

INCUBATION | After a few days, the egg will hatch into a larva and will eat the pollen/nectar. The larva will then spin a cocoon, pupate within the leaf cell and transform into its adult stage. Here, in the safety of the cocoon, it will wait out winter and emerge the following summer.

FALL+WINTER | When the temperatures begin to drop in the fall, remove your bottle and store in a dark, unheated location with nesting tubes ends up. (Leaving the bee bottle outside exposes the nests to pests and weather elements). In summer, when temperatures are steadily in the high 70s, replace your bee bottle in last summer's location. Once temperatures reach 80-85°F (27-29°C), your bees will begin to emerge. As soon as all your bees have taken flight, replace the used bee tubes with clean new ones and you are ready to enjoy the next generation.

REPLACEMENT NESTING TUBES | Having replacement tubes on hand before your bees emerge is necessary to continue the pollination cycle. Once bees take flight, approximately 3-7 days with steady temperature, the tubes will need to be replaced for next seasons nest building to begin. Bee Bottle™ nesting tube refills are available at pottingshedcreations.com.

WE STAND BEHIND WHAT WE MAKE | Our goal is to produce products of the finest quality and surpass your expectations. If you have a question or problem, just give us a call.



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