

Bee House No. 2

This bee house design is for people who want something a little bit classy, a little fancy, for the native bees in their area to nest in!



Materials

-- **Three pieces of equal sized lumber.** I bought a 2" x 10" x 10' board and had the hardware store cut it into nine 11-inch long pieces (enough for three houses) plus one smaller reject piece. (I have a good saw, but honestly I didn't want to bother.) The piece of wood you choose can really be anything that's more than 6 inches deep, so go with what feels right! My boards ended up being wider than they needed to be, so I would get something a little less wide next time, something in the 8 inch depth most likely.

-- **Drill**

-- **Long drill bits in assorted sizes.** I used 1/4 inch and 21/64 inch, but anything between 1/4 and 3/8 inch or so works. The more different sized holes you provide, the more species of bees you might attract!

-- **Sandpaper (and a sander if you have one,** but you can just rub the wood with the sandpaper by hand if you don't). I used 120 grit paper, but considering it's going to be sitting outside I didn't

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bother with getting it perfectly smooth, just enough to get rid of rough edges.

-- **Wood stain (optional).** I like the stains that stain and seal in one. This gives the wood a nice finish, but also protects the wood from the elements to some extent. I went with the walnut stain. For a more rustic look, you can leave the wood unfinished.

-- **Foam brush or other paint brush.**

-- **Newspaper or masking paper**

-- **Paper towels**

-- **Carpenter's glue**

-- **Copper hanger strap** (in the plumbing department)

-- **Ruler**

-- **24- 1/2 inch #8 wood screws** - or more if you choose not to use the...

-- **Thumbtacks or upholstery tacks (optional)**

-- **Screwdriver**

-- **Hammer**

Instructions

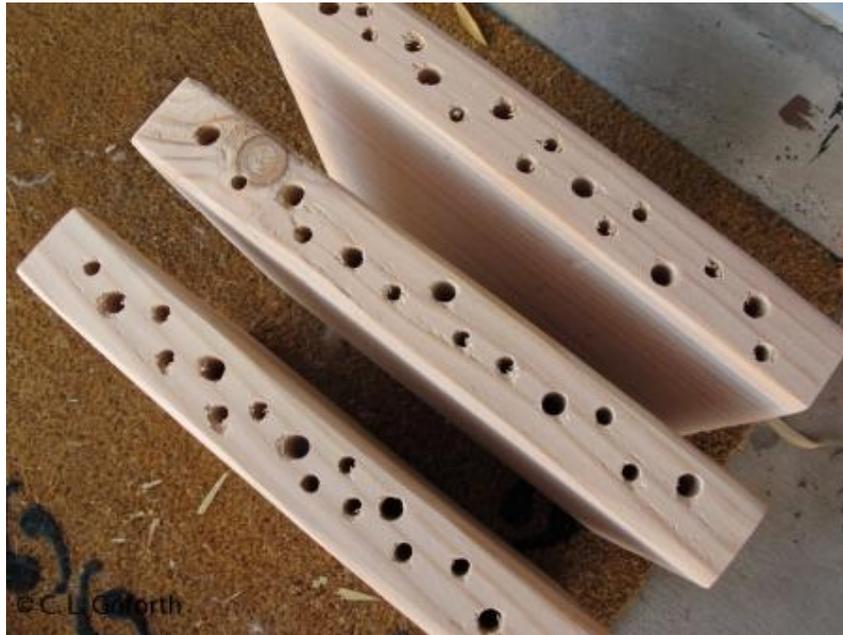
STEP 1. CUT



If you don't have them cut at the store, cut your board into three equally sized pieces.

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STEP 2. DRILL



Drill the different sizes of holes in whatever pattern you find appealing along the narrowest edge of the board. Drill as deep as you can, avoiding the edges. If you're a perfectionist and abysmal woodworker like me, trust me: random hole placement is the way to go. You're never going to get the holes lined up as nicely as you'd like without a drill press and a good workbench and it will just frustrate you if you try!

STEP 3. SAND



Sand every side of the boards, making sure the edges and the drilled holes are free of any sharp pieces that could result in splinters. I used an orbital sander and it made quick work of this step. Look over your boards and choose the two pieces that have the most pleasing appearance to be your top and bottom boards, then sand those especially carefully so that they're quite smooth.

STEP 4. STAIN



This step is optional, but I wanted to protect the wood and make it darker. If using, place the boards on newspaper or masking paper, then apply the stain in a thin, even layer. You really don't need to stain the parts of the board that will be hidden inside the bee nest, so I only stained around all the edges and what were going to be the top and bottom edges. Wait 5-15 minutes and then gently and evenly wipe any remaining stain from the boards. Let them dry for at least a few hours, or even overnight. If you want to make the nest extra weather resistant, you could seal the wood with polyurethane or some other sealant at this point, but I wanted my wood to look a little rustic and left it with just stain.

STEP 5. GLUE

Apply a thin layer of glue to the bottom of the top board and fix it to the middle board. Do the same with the bottom board on the other side. Make sure all the holes are facing the same way! This will make the next step a lot easier. Pile a few books on top and leave to dry overnight. You could even stop here if you want to keep things simple.

STEP 6. STRAP



I love the look of the welded metal frames of some bee houses I've seen, so I wanted to easily duplicate the sort of metal on wood look without buying welding equipment or burning my house down. To do so, I used copper hanger strap. Measure around the house and cut two pieces of hanger strap the measured length plus 1/2 inch. Choose which part of the house will be the bottom. On the chosen bottom, measure in 2 inches from one edge and place one end of the hanger strap there. Drill a screw into the wood through the first hole to fix the hanger strap in place. Then wrap the hanger strap around the house, always keeping it 2 inches from the edge. Use the hammer to bend the strap around the edges tightly. Fix the strap in place every 3 inches or so along the long side by adding a screw. Use one screw in each board on the narrow sides. Repeat this step on the other side of the bee house so that there are 2 bands of hanger strap around it.

STEP 7. DECORATE

I decided to jazz up my bee house a bit more by pressing gold thumbtacks into the hanger strap at regular intervals. Simply press them into the gaps in the hanger strap, then tap them gently with a hammer to seat them well.

STEP 8. DISPLAY

Once complete, the bee house should be placed somewhere it will get shade during the day so it won't get too hot for the bees. I'm going to thread some wire under the hanger strap and hang mine from the tree my other bee house is in, but you could simply set it along a fence, retaining wall, or raised garden bed too. It could lay flat or stand vertically - your choice!

STEP 9. ENJOY!



Enjoy watching the bees build their nests in their new bee box!

I bought enough supplies for 3 bee houses and they ended up costing \$12.74 a piece to build. Not a bad deal for several years' worth of bee observing happiness!

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