

## Solitary Bees

Native bees are gentle, easy to raise, and fun to watch bees who help us double or triple our food yield. Raising native bees in your gardens, farms, and orchards creates much-needed habitat for pollinators.

European honey bees have become a vital part of our agriculture and we are concerned with their ever-increasing host of problems due to stress, pests, diseases, and habitat changes. Crown Bees is optimistic and offers an easy solution: gardeners can raise **hole-nesting bees** to help relieve the honey bee.

Most people are surprised to learn that the world is home to a huge diversity of bees: over 21,000 species!

### What are hole-nesting bees?

To learn about hole-nesting bees, we first need to learn how most bees actually live. Social bees like the honey bee are actually the exception, and not the rule, for bee behavior. About **90% of bee species are solitary**, meaning they don't live in a colony, build hives, make honey, or swarm.

In **solitary bee species**, every female bee is a fertile egg-laying bee and she must work alone to perform all the duties to care for her young. The lifespan of most solitary bees is only about 4-6 weeks, making solitary bees efficient pollinators who work long days. The way that solitary bees live and behave is pretty different from the popular and well-known social bee.

- Instead of honey, each solitary bee egg gets its own pollen and nectar loaf.
- Most solitary bees hibernate over the fall and winter inside of cocoons.

Solitary bees are **gentle bees** because they do not have a hive and stores of honey to defend. A rare sting from a solitary bee hurts less because they lack the honey bee's venom.

- Solitary bees only sting as a last resort if you accidentally squish or step on them.
- Male bees of any bee species do not even have stingers.

North America is home to about **4,000 native bee species**. Native bees are in tune with their local landscapes, plants, and weather patterns, meaning they are a better-suited bee to raise in your backyard. Native bees are also struggling with stress from chemicals and habitat loss, and their populations may be declining. We need to work together to get to know our native bees and help keep them from going extinct.

\*Copied from [Crownbees.com](http://Crownbees.com) They sell solitary bees, kits and houses