

GENERAL FACTS

- Leafcutter bees belong to the the Megachilidae family of bee species, and are members of the genus Megachile.
- They are non-aggressive, non-colonising solitary bees that pollinate almost anything.
- The leafcutter bee is an excellent alternative summer pollinator, and works harmoniously with other bee species such as the honey bee and bumble bee.
- Appearance wise, they are smaller in stature than a honey bee and can be distinctly recognised by their fuzzy, thin yellow and grey stripey abdomen.



KEY BENEFITS

- ✓ Increase leafcutter bee population
- ✓ Raise awareness of solitary bees
- ✓ Increase pollination nationwide
- ✓ Secure the food supply for generations to follow

DID YOU KNOW?

- In certain situations 150 leafcutter bees can provide the pollination service of 3000 honey bees.
- Leafcutter bees do not have pollen baskets on their hind legs. Instead, they collect pollen on hairs on the underside of their abdomens.



GET INVOLVED

We need community involvement so that we can continue pollinating our gardens, orchards and crops



<https://www.beegap.co.nz>



LEAFCUTTER BEE HOUSE

Information guide



WELCOME

OVERVIEW

Passionate about the future of bees in New Zealand, *Creative Woodcraft* has teamed up with pollination experts to help spread the word and encourage Kiwi gardeners to raise and nurture gentle-natured bees to their backyards.

Bees are vital pollinators for our fruits, nuts, vegetables and flowers. They pollinate 1/3 of our food supply and 1/3 of the feed for our meat sources nationwide.

Historically, commercial growers have relied primarily on the honey bee. However, this social bee is now facing troubles - and while science looks for answers, BeeGAP (in association with *Creative Woodcraft*), offers an excellent pollination supplement with the use of solitary leafcutter bees and bumble bees.



SUMMER POLLINATORS

HABITAT

Three essential elements for successfully raising leafcutter bees are:

- Nesting habitats with wooden grooved trays for easy harvesting of cocoons in autumn.
- Summer pollen sources such as; garden vegetables & flowers.
- Leafcutter bees prefer soft, flexible plants to harvest leaves to build their nests, (eg; lilac, flower petals, clover, roses and many other plant species).



EMERGENCE

Leafcutter bees are summer pollinators, emerging any time from November onwards. Once they have chosen their nest site (all going well, your Leafcutter Bee House), they begin to pollinate.

They do not travel more than a few hundred metres, unless there is a shortage of flowers to forage on (meaning pollination stays in your garden). The average nesting season is up to three months, after which they gently fade away after creating new cocoons containing next summers bees.

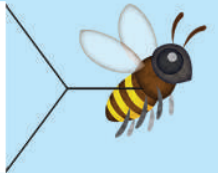
TAKE DOWN AND WINTER PREPARATION

The Megachile species require several months of winter temperatures for successful re-emergence next summer. In May, take down your bee house and follow the instructions for harvesting your leafcutter bee cocoons at BeeGAP.

Visit <https://www.beegap.co.nz> for more information.



GETTING STARTED



1 Remove spring loaded clip to release nesting trays.



2 Remove nesting trays from the leafcutter bee house.



3 Remove elastic bands and separate nesting trays.



4 Place cocoons, one per tunnel, and re-stack trays.



5 Screw post mounting sleeve to base of leafcutter bee house.



6 Slide leafcutter bee house on to y-post (waratah).



7 Re-stack trays and apply rubber bands.



8 Place nesting trays back into your house and re-insert spring loaded clip.



For more info visit www.beegap.co.nz