

# BEE POSITIVE



## ABOUT

Although honeybees are integral to agriculture and our eco system, all bees gather nectar and pollen and they transfer pollen grains from flower to flower, meaning that they are important pollinators for any garden, and encouraging them into it has huge benefits. One great way to do so is to provide nest sites and you can do this using everyday objects.

Take a look below for some great examples:

## CANNED BEES

### 1 GET A CAN

- Find yourself a spare baked beans tin
- Drill a row of 13mm (1/2in) diameter holes down one side of the can (at the bottom to let water drain out)
- Flatten or smooth off any sharp edges with a sharp drill bit



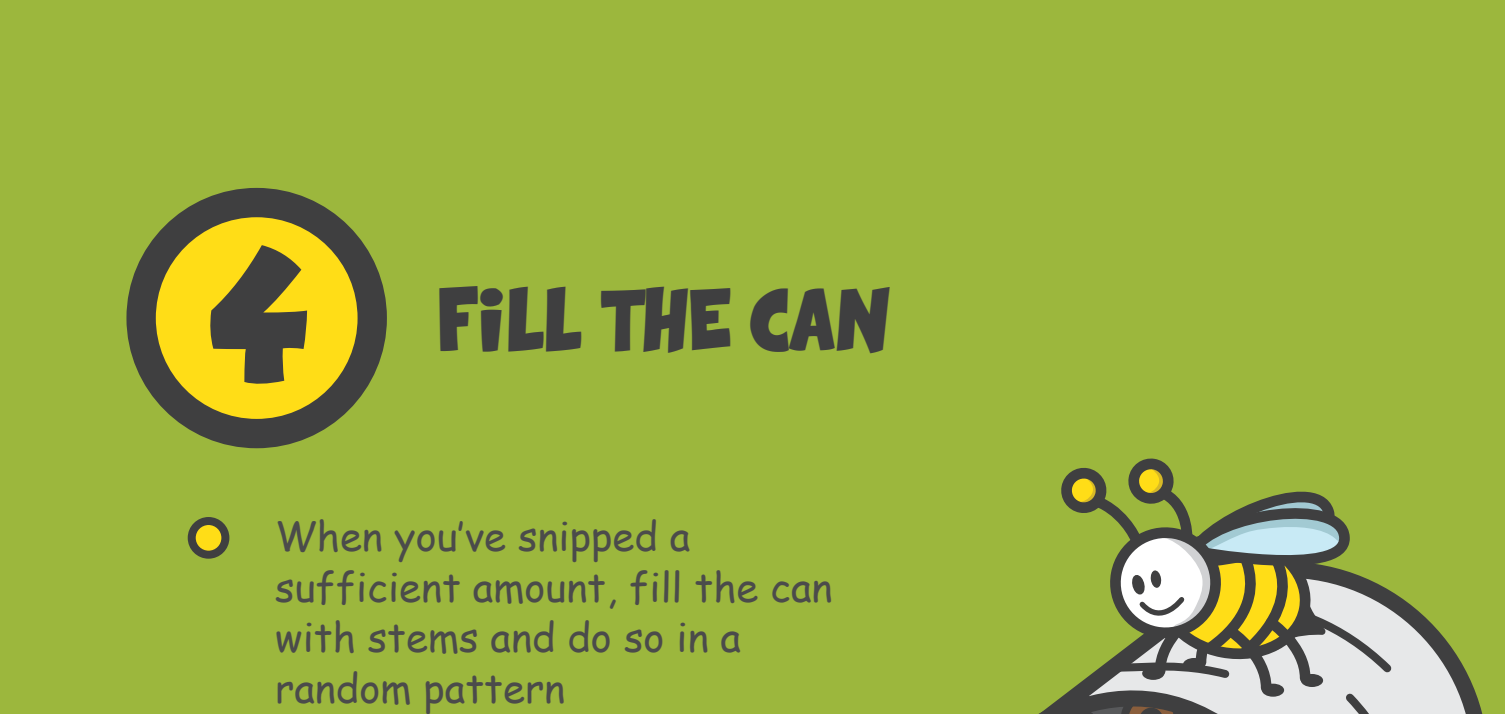
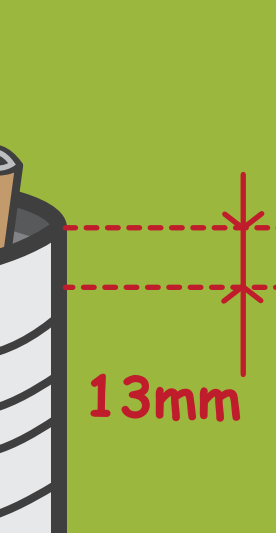
### 2 FIND SOME STEMS



- Pick some dead and hollow plant stems directly from your garden. The stems need to have holes that are 4mm to 13mm in diameter
- Make sure they are dry, hollow and smooth on the insides

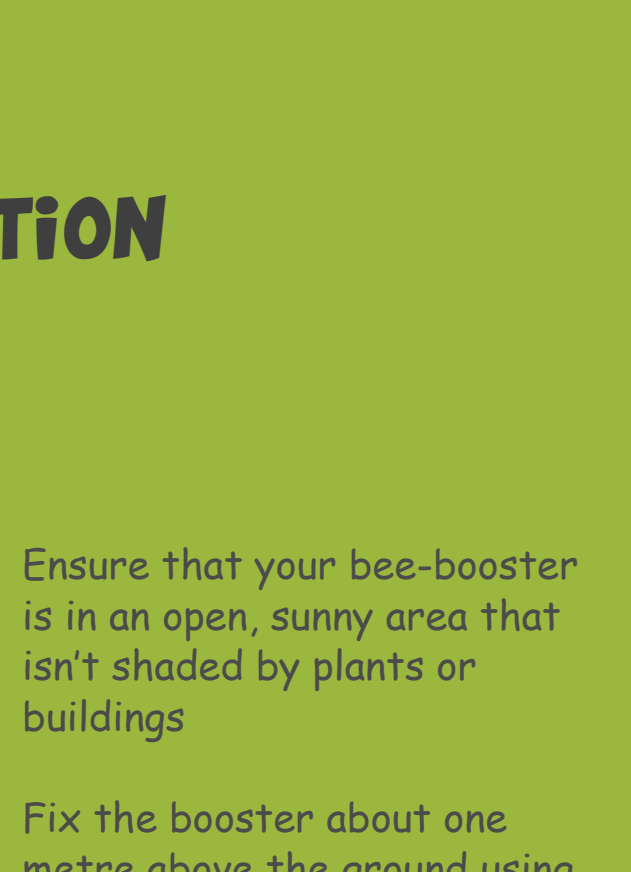
### 3 CUT THE STEMS TO SIZE

- With your stems, pick one to be your "master" stem, and cut it to a length what will sit 13mm inside the can's rim
- Use scissors to cut the other stems into identical lengths (roughly 10cm)
- Aim for a mix of diameter holes. Remember though, each stem must be hollow!



### 4 FILL THE CAN

- When you've snipped a sufficient amount, fill the can with stems and do so in a random pattern
- Ensure that they fit tightly to stop them falling out
- When you turn the can upside down the stems should stay in place and not fall out



### 5 FIND A LOCATION



- Ensure that your bee-booster is in an open, sunny area that isn't shaded by plants or buildings
- Fix the booster about one metre above the ground using wire tied around the can, with a loop at the end
- You can then hammer a nail into a post to attach the can to (drainage holes must be at the bottom)

## BEE-RISE BLOCK

### 1 CHOOSE YOUR BLOCK

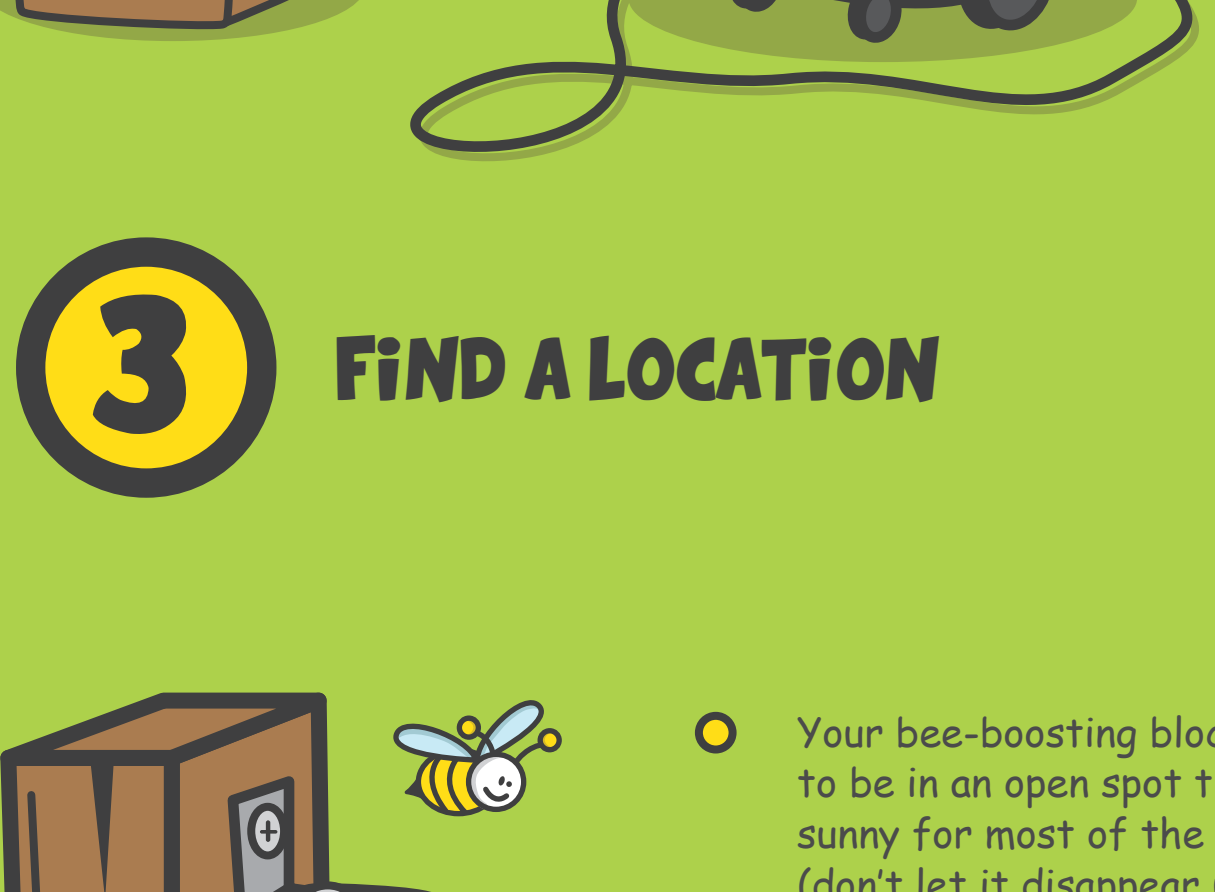
Wooden pallets aren't just for making compost bins, as they can also be turned into bee-boosters

- Ensure the block is 10-15cm deep and not treated with a preservative
- Use drill bits to drill a selection of small vertical holes (between 4mm and 13mm in diameter)
- Ensure they are random and that the bit does not go through the block

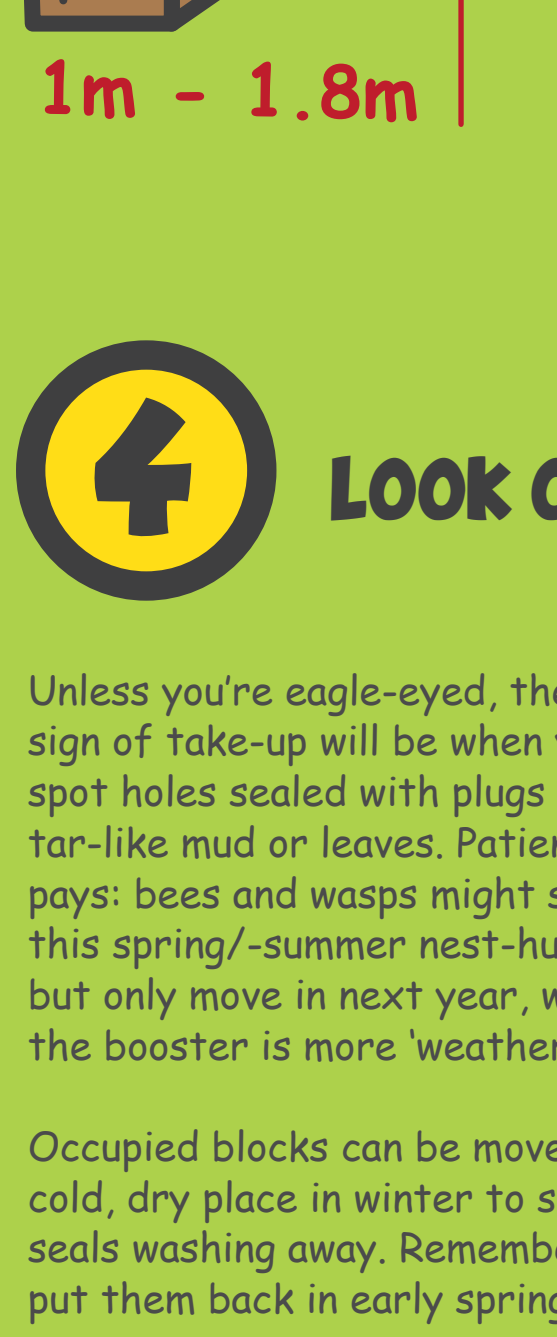


### 2 CLEAN YOUR BLOCK

- Give the holes a clean using a Hoover to get rid of the sawdust
- Solitary bees will be much more inclined to nest if the holes are smooth
- Rub fine sandpaper around the inside edges of each and every hole



### 3 FIND A LOCATION

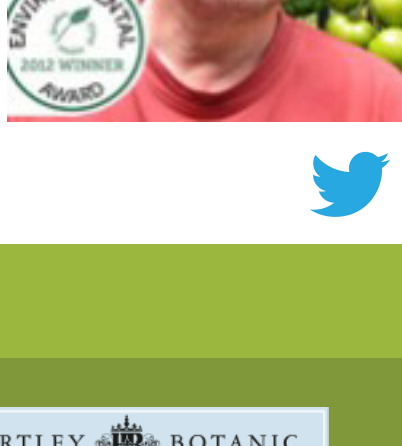


- Your bee-boosting block needs to be in an open spot that is sunny for most of the day (don't let it disappear under plants!)
- A wooden post, wall or fence is great, but must be no higher than 1.8m
- A deluxe-booster could be made with a sloping top to help keep out the rain

### 4 LOOK OUT FOR WINTER

Unless you're eagle-eyed, the first sign of take-up will be when you spot holes sealed with plugs of mortar-like mud or leaves. Patience pays: bees and wasps might spend this spring/-summer nest-hunting, but only move in next year, when the booster is more 'weathered in'.

Occupied blocks can be moved to a cold, dry place in winter to stop the seals washing away. Remember to put them back in early spring.



## JOHN WALKER

Award-winning gardening and environment writer John is making a 'climate-friendly' garden on the edge of woodland at his home in Snowdonia, where his large lean-to greenhouse is powered by free, non-polluting and renewable modern sunshine. He is a featured author at [hartley-botanic.co.uk](http://hartley-botanic.co.uk)