



Bee Kind to Bees: Make a Bee Condo

Have you heard the buzz about declining bee populations? In the past 20 years, beekeepers have observed the sudden and unexplained decline of honeybee populations, which is a problem because bees are responsible for pollinating a third of the foods we eat! The good news is even kids can do things that will help encourage honeybee population, like making a Bee Condo for bees to live in. Here's a fun project to do with your kids to teach them about the importance of bees and how they live.



A Bee Condo is a homemade place for bees to live in. Although bees like to make their own homes (sometimes in a hollow tree branch, or by burrowing in the dirt), they will also move into nesting blocks like our Bee Condo. We adapted our craft from the bee condo instructions found at Pollinator.org.

Remember to teach your kids about not disturbing bees and their homes when you find them. Bees will leave you alone if you leave them alone!

What you need to make a bee condo:

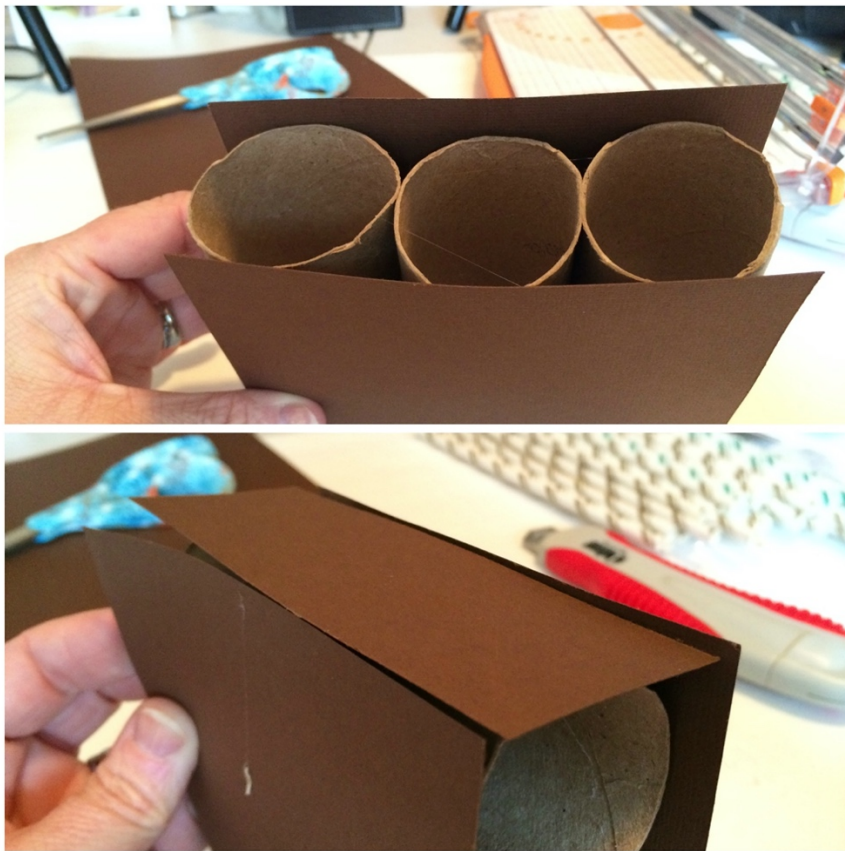
- Brown heavy cardstock paper or a recycled Honey Kix cereal box
- Cardboard tubes (from paper towel rolls)
- Paper straws (not plastic)
- Scissors
- Hot glue and glue gun (parents only)
- Hole punch and string

How to Make a Bee Condo from Paper Straws and Recycled Materials:



Bees will find a bundle of paper straws with one end blocked off to be a hospitable place to create a home. Find paper straws in the party section of your local department store, or online. Bees prefer dark colors for their homes, so choose brown paper or the unprinted side of the cereal box to face outward on your bee condo.

1. Trim cardboard tubes into about 3" lengths.

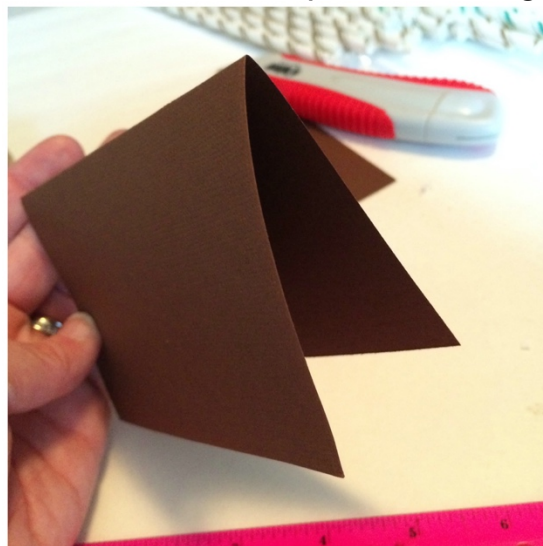


2. Fold brown heavy cardstock or a recycled cereal box into a rectangle shape to house the cardboard tubes. Glue tubes inside rectangle.

3. Fill cardboard tubes with paper straws and trim straws to fit. If needed, secure straws in cardboard tubes with glue.

4. Parents only: fill ends of one side of paper straws with hot glue to block them off.

5. Fold a rectangle of cardstock into a sloped roof and glue on top of rectangle shape. Punch a hole in the top of the roof and add a piece of string for hanging the condo.



6. Add a rectangular piece of paper as a base to complete your bee condo.





We found some great ideas for how kids can help bees at [The Daily Green.com](http://TheDailyGreen.com). Here are some tips to share with them:

- **Respect bee homes** — do not disturb bee homes when you find them outside. Leave the bees alone so they can keep pollinating plants and making honey.
- **Bee calm around bees** — keep your eyes open when walking barefoot outside, and avoid stepping on bees. Bees will not bother you if you don't bother them!
- **Bee sure to eat local honey** — support your local bee keepers by buying local honey. You might find special honey flavors that are made from single flower sources, such as buckwheat, lavender, or raspberry. (Note: infants under the age of 12 months should not eat raw honey).
- **Add a water source in your garden** — bees need water to survive. They like calm, shallow water sources, so adding a dish of water to your garden can encourage bees to stop and get a drink.
- **Plant bee-friendly flowers** — attract bees to your yard by planting flowers and plants that bees like. Bees are attracted to blue, purple, and yellow flowers especially, but not all flowers will attract bees. Here are two lists of [bee-friendly plants](#) from the Royal Horticulture Society.

You can learn more about saving our bees at the [Greenpeace SOS Bees](#) site.

Heather Mann is the mother of four boys, and is constantly on the lookout for fun games, activities, and recipes to keep her busy boys, well, busy. She designs and shares clever crafts with a frugal twist at her site [Dollar Store Crafts](#) and ideas for being the best mom ever (on a budget) at [Dollar Store Mom](#).