

Perfect Pollinators Project

We are looking for Primary schools across Sussex to take part in our Perfect Pollinators project, and host their very own nest box for solitary bees. Perfect Pollinators is a collaboration between the University of Sussex and NatureQuest and we aim to engage children in scientific research by enabling them to become 'citizen scientists' and help us to collect important data on the behaviour of these fascinating animals whose populations are sadly declining.

Your school will be provided with free nest boxes, specially designed to allow children to observe the nesting behaviour of solitary bees. These bees do not sting and don't require any maintenance. The nest box contains special trays which pull out and allow children to view the developing bees, providing an excellent resource for teaching about insect life cycles.

After receiving training from us, we would like you to work with your pupils to pick the best spot to place your nest, which provides a perfect opportunity to discuss the habitat and food requirements of bees.

Once bees start nesting in early Spring (April-May 2017) we would like you to collect data on their behaviour, such as when the first bees arrive, how many foraging trips they make over a set observation period, and how many nests they make in total. Children will learn how to design an experiment and how to present scientific data. We will then collect this data from all the schools taking part in the project, to compare how well bees do in rural and urban environments. Each school will receive a copy of the final results.

We would love this project to run over several years, so you will be able to keep the nest boxes and use them for engaging future pupils in pollinator research.

To register your interest in taking part, or if you would like to learn more about the project, please contact Dr. Beth Nicholls via email: e.nicholls@sussex.ac.uk or phone: 01273 873377



Nest boxes can be placed at child-height so pupils can observe bees flying in and out (A). The trays are removable and inside you will be able to see the pollen collected by bees (B), and watch the young bees develop and spin cocoons (C).