



## Nurturing Nature's Helpers

### A Bee House Project for Local Schools

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My school decided to plan an environmentally-themed day for our gifted and talented students in the district. I was asked to lead a station and help students build bee houses. The other two stations included building a birdhouse and making raptor tail guards for our local wildlife center. We needed to make plans for students who were in elementary school up through high school.

I ended up making bee house kits for the event after the organizers bought kits that were too shallow and would be impossible to properly clean. I put together 12 kits with instructions about how to build the house, as well as how to care for the house and the residents. I also included information about possible residents of the house, including mason bees and mason wasps.



*Bee House Kit*



*Guides for students*

I worked to create different brochures and informational sheets for the students in the different grade levels. One info sheet provided ways to help pollinators such as reducing or eliminating pesticide use and planting native plants. I included a brochure with places where students could learn more, such as the Virginia Native Plant Society and Bee Friendly Gardening, as well as ways to support pollinators at their schools.

Our event began with a representative from Grand Caverns discussing the history of the cave, as well as the formations in the cave. We split the students into three groups, each with

elementary, middle, and high school students. Our high school students acted as guides and “experts” at the different stations.

I started my discussion with a conversation about native bees and wasps. I acknowledged that stings could happen while letting students know about our native bees who are

**POLLINATOR  
PARTNERSHIP**



*Students working together to build a pollinator house*

Students took their pollinator houses back to their schools to hang in their small gardens. These pollinator houses will continue to provide educational opportunities, as other students see them and ask about what they are and how they work. I also used these houses as educational opportunities for the other teachers, as many of them did not know anything about pollinator houses. All in all, it was a very successful day, with students taking home new knowledge about pollinators, which is really the purpose of bee houses, in my opinion.

solitary nesters, like those who use bee houses. I shared information about the bee houses and why they are designed in a specific way. We then started putting together the houses, while I continued to answer questions and share information about native bees and wasps. I also talked with the high schoolers about programs that might be of interest to them, including Bee Friendly Gardening and Bee Friendly Farming. We live in a rural area and many of our students live on farm land.



*A photo of one of the bee houses*