

Clearing and Native Bee Habitat

Land clearing for agriculture is probably the single most important cause of environmental degradation and loss of flora and fauna species in Australia (CSIRO). This loss of species also includes social and solitary native bees. Significantly, loss of nesting habitat strongly contributes to their demise.

Native bees utilise various habitat types, including trees; logs; timbers; plant stems; leaves; soil; and creek banks. By day most bees will forage and go about their work. However, when night falls, many of the solitary bees will use the branchlets on trees to hang out and rest.

Native bees also use small to medium sized hollows or pipes in trees and branches, or cracks and crevices of trees, to make their nests. Shrubs can also provide useful habitat including leaf matter that is used by a number of bee species for their nesting materials.

“Help preserve and encourage native bees, these pollinators are an essential part of the food web”.

What do Bees Need

Native bees need a safe nesting area; shelter from wind, rain and extreme temperatures; food and water sources; and protection from pesticides, predators and diseases. They also need water, soil, bare ground, ground-covers, grasses, lillies, shrubs and trees, and a continual flowering cycle to collect their resources.

Reduce the Risk to Native Bees



•Undertake pre-clearing inspections, search for darkened spots near holes or crevices, search for signs in the timber where beetle holes or tree cankers may exist. Check trees lying on ground even dead trees are habitat.

•Survey all ground areas and see if there are holes anywhere from 5mm to 25mm and or signs of bees flying . Survey area late afternoon or evening to search for solitary bees hanging about or in a cluster on branchlets.

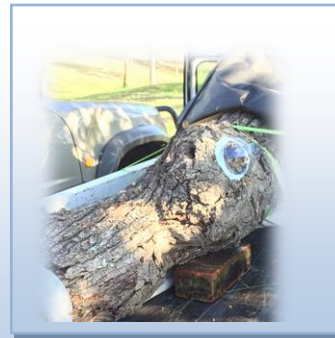
•If you find a nest and the bees can be rescued and relocated see our rescue care fact for more info. Retain areas of vegetation to enable neighbouring bees to forage and utilise for habitat. Build Habitat points for the solitary bees prior to clearing, these can include pvc pipes, besa blocks or mini bee hotels.

CLARENCE NATIVE BEES – CARE FACT 4

Storm Damage

Wind storms, electrical storms and heavy rain events can wreak havoc on homes and property. They also cause damage to native trees, particularly larger species because as trees age they become heavier and are not as easily supported by their roots, which predisposes them to falling down. Branches in tree tops can be snapped off in the wind, struck by lightning or during heavy rainfall can become heavily weighted with water, snap and fall down. Some native trees are famous for their habit of de-limbing including many of the Eucalyptus species which also happen to be favoured habitat for native bees.

When vegetation appears on the ground after storm damage, we often just go about clearing up the mess either by piling and burning, cutting the timber for firewood, or mulching. However, to keep bees safe, please inspect the branches or trees first to identify if native bees are living in that habitat and need to be rescued prior to any clearing, burning or mulching.



Native Stingless Bees rescued from trees that were felled (Photos : Susan Moore)

Reduce the Risk to Native Bees



- If you intend to burn a pile of logs or cut the timber for firewood, check for native bees and other animals before you do so.

- Are you cutting firewood...check the tree, does it have bees, can you choose another tree in the area. If you can't and need to cut the tree, cut the hive out, it can still be saved. Refer to our Rescue Care Fact on how to cut the hive.

- If you find bees – check out our Rescue Care Fact for information on how to rescue & relocate the bees. If unsure please contact the Native Bee Rescue Coordinator.