

Location and Real Estate

Home Sweet Home

Native stingless bees need real estate and this usually comes in the way of trees that develop hollows, pipes or tubes in their trunks and branches. Ridges of sandstone formations where dry shrubby sclerophyll woodland exists and grasslands or heathland are favoured habitat. Native bees can also be found in other vegetation types as well, including dead trees.

The native bees need to be well resourced in terms of pollen, nectar, resin, and materials within their location, as their flight range is limited to 500 metres. *Tetragonula carbonaria* build their hives in a spiral formation whereas *Austroplebia australis* build their hive with a long entrance and in a scattered manner within the hollow. At night these bees cover their entrance with a fine curtain of wax.

It is very difficult for the untrained eye to find the entrances of native bee hive nests. Using a pair of binoculars will definitely help your search. The entrance will have a northerly to north east aspect and, in most cases, this will be a darkened spot that looks like an oil splatter surrounding a small split, knot, hole or crack. There may be small insect movement around this hole which will only be evident on warm days. Standing behind the tree you may also be able to see the bees flying around the tree in the sunlight. A cement like seam running up a side of a branch or tree could indicate patching by bees to seal the nest so do not disregard these features, look a little closer. Native stingless bees generally do not swarm and move to other locations. They can spend >30 years in the one hive. **Remember, if they don't need to be moved, then please leave them BEE!** This care sheet is to be used with Care Facts “Clearing and Native Bee Habitat”



•Real Estate how many suitable trees have structures with the necessary hollows.

- Time of day for survey - Little activity from native bees at dawn or dusk.
- Temperature - it must be >18°C or more for native bees to forage.

•Rain or strong wind will inhibit the bees from foraging.

CLARENCE NATIVE BEES - CARE FACT 6



Native stingless bee hive entrances and exposed native bee nest showing length of hive from entrance
(Photos : Neville Anderson)