

BUZZING HOMES



Congratulations to Sarah Blake in Cranleigh for winning the free Cathie's Mobile Gardening School consultancy and to everyone else who won the reduced-fee visits. The response was overwhelming so I may think of another promotion in the future.

Your autumn project

Regular readers will know I'm passionate about bees and other pollinators – without them we'd have very little to eat! You must have noticed recent publicity on this subject. Whilst I don't expect everyone to have a beehive, you can encourage solitary bees into your garden and I am challenging everyone to create a home for them. I have recently completed a huge palace constructed in a wooden book case. The response on social media has been enormous so I thought I'd share it with my *Round & About* readers! If you are a Facebook user, find Cathie's Gardening School on there.

Solitary bees

These insects are just as important pollinators as honey bees and bumble bees but are easier to manage as they work alone. They are very docile (people are rarely stung by solitary bees). I myself have become anaphylactic and have to be very careful tending my honey bees but have no concerns watching the solitary ones going about their daily business. They are fascinating and come in many shapes and sizes, from honey bee size to that of an ant (yes, really!). Knowing this will help you create your bee house. Leafcutter bees are incredible and you can see them cutting circles from the edge of rose leaves, particularly and also I have some Acer and Cercis leaves which have been delicately laced by these bees, and a very welcome sight it is, too!

How to make your house

This depends on how big you want it to be. A large garden can accommodate one made from pallets. A bookcase can be mounted on a wall or if you are handy with a saw and hammer, you can construct your own from timber. Those of you who attended the beekeeping workshop last year will have created one from a plastic drinks bottle. This is the easiest and one of the most effective of

all and needn't cost a penny! It is even better if you grow your own bamboo as it's softer and easier to cut up! Old garden canes have a habit of shattering.

Items to collect, recycle and buy...

- Plastic drinks bottle, bricks, tiles, cans and containers (to house the bamboo but not essential)
- Wooden offcuts with holes drilled in them (most important for solitary bees)
- Bamboo or other hollow stems (most important for solitary bees)
- Pine cones and other seedheads (look pretty and provide homes for other bugs)
- Dried flowers, grasses, seeds, shells, straw etc (look pretty and provide homes for other bugs)

You would be amazed how many household, garden and foraged items can come together artistically and provide a much needed home for these precious garden visitors. One more very important point is that it needs to be somewhere sunny, a south-facing wall or shed is perfect.

Courses and workshops

Cathie's Mobile Gardening School is up and running for teaching you in your own gardens and as an unusual gift. Cathie's Gardening school is at Squire's in Milford until December where you can undertake workshops on pruning, willow weaving and metal flower sculpture. Tracey's popular winter borders morning workshop is on 5th November and there are places available, cost £40.

Applegarth in Grayshott is looking at relocating the gardening school for me and lots of other exciting projects so watch this space.....

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