Resilient Ecosystems

Standing Habitat

Native Bees

Did you know that BC has nearly 600 native bee species? This is among the highest diversity in Canada. The Southern Interior alone has around 400 species.

The forest provides both forage opportunities and nesting habitat for bees. Many bee species live in trees, specifically cracks, bark sloughs and small crevices. So snags! We knew they were good for something. Over the decomposition of a standing tree it provides different types of standing habitat. As the tree rots, the bark begins to slough.

Sloughing bark is good bee habitat because it provides:

- **Dry, protected micro-cavities**
- **Thermal stability** (important in BC's climate)
- **Predator protection**
- **Ready-made nest chambers** for solitary bees

There are four bee genus that nest under sloughing bark: Mason Bees (Osmia), Leafcutter Bees (Megachile), Small Carpenter Bees (Ceratina), and some Sweat Bees (Halictidae).

Indicators that your snag is being utilized by bees include;

- Mud plugs in narrow bark crevices
- Leaf-lined crevices
- Frass
- Presence of flowers nearby
- Multiple parallel crevices with uniform spacing.

Native bees and wildflowers have co-evolved. These insects pollinate plants in our forests allowing the ecosystem to produce seeds and fruit for countless other animals from birds to bears.

Sloughing Bark on a snag is an important old forest attribute. While we can't maintain everything in a block, keeping snags provides habitat for a variety of bees and other insects.

Links

Did you know:

- We didn't forget bumble bees, they nest in the ground or in vegetation close to the ground.
- Most bees are solitary
- Honey Bees are not Native to North America

Find out how many bees are in your area:

https://www.bcnativebees.org/bee-diversity

BC SPCA

Woodlots BC