



Native Solitary Ground Bees

“The public already cares about pollinators; we just need to expand our understanding and conversation about bees to include native bees and not just focus on honey bees.”

Notes from the following articles:

1. “Ground-nesting Bees Are Solitary and Often Stingless” by Jessalyn Shields June 29, 2021 - [Howstuffworks.com](https://www.howstuffworks.com)
2. “Ground Nesting Bees” - [Thebeeconservancy.org](https://www.thebeeconservancy.org)
3. “Remember The Ground Nesting Bees When You Make Your Patch of Land Pollinator-Friendly”- By Aimee Code on 20. June 2019 - Xerces Society

- While honey bees pollinate one third of the food we eat, native bees are responsible for pollinating 80% of the world’s flowering plants.
- Seventy percent of native bee species in the United States are ground nesting.
- Ground bees are also referred to as mining or digger bees because they nest in the ground
- Ground bees are solitary bees. Each female usually digs her own burrow to rear her young.
- Large numbers of these bees may nest close together if soil conditions are suitable and will fly just above the ground. When this happens, some people may consider them a nuisance.
- They are not aggressive, seldom sting, and their flying activity lasts only 2 to 4 weeks.
- Sometimes large numbers of males will fly about the same spot for several days in a mating display.
- They can also nest beneath leaves or in rotting wood which is an important reminder of why homeowners should leave a patch of leaves in their yard. Most don't destroy wood, or excavate cavities in wood, but rather use pre-existing insect burrows.
- A solitary bee nest is a tube about 6 inches long, excavated in dry soil by a female bee. There are many challenges that come from nesting in the ground: predators; moisture and flooding; intense heat; the challenges over overwintering; nest disturbance by people, vehicles, other large animals; and pesticides are just a few.
- Because most of us associate bees with a honey bee's propensity to sting, we often try to get rid of bees or yellow jackets (which are actually wasps) in our yards and around our houses.
- Many solitary bees are very tiny, smaller than a grain of rice, and rarely sting.
- Solitary ground nesting bees are not much of a threat to lawns and turf. You can continue to mow your lawn, play and picnic as usual right next to the bees, but if there are many nests in an area, you might want to avoid that spot for one to two months while the bees are nesting. If you must dissuade the bees from nesting, don't use a pesticide — heavy watering can encourage them to pack up and pick another spot.