

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick

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OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
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For the week of
June 10, 2007

Q. Dear Twig: How can I build a house for native bees? You mentioned it last week.

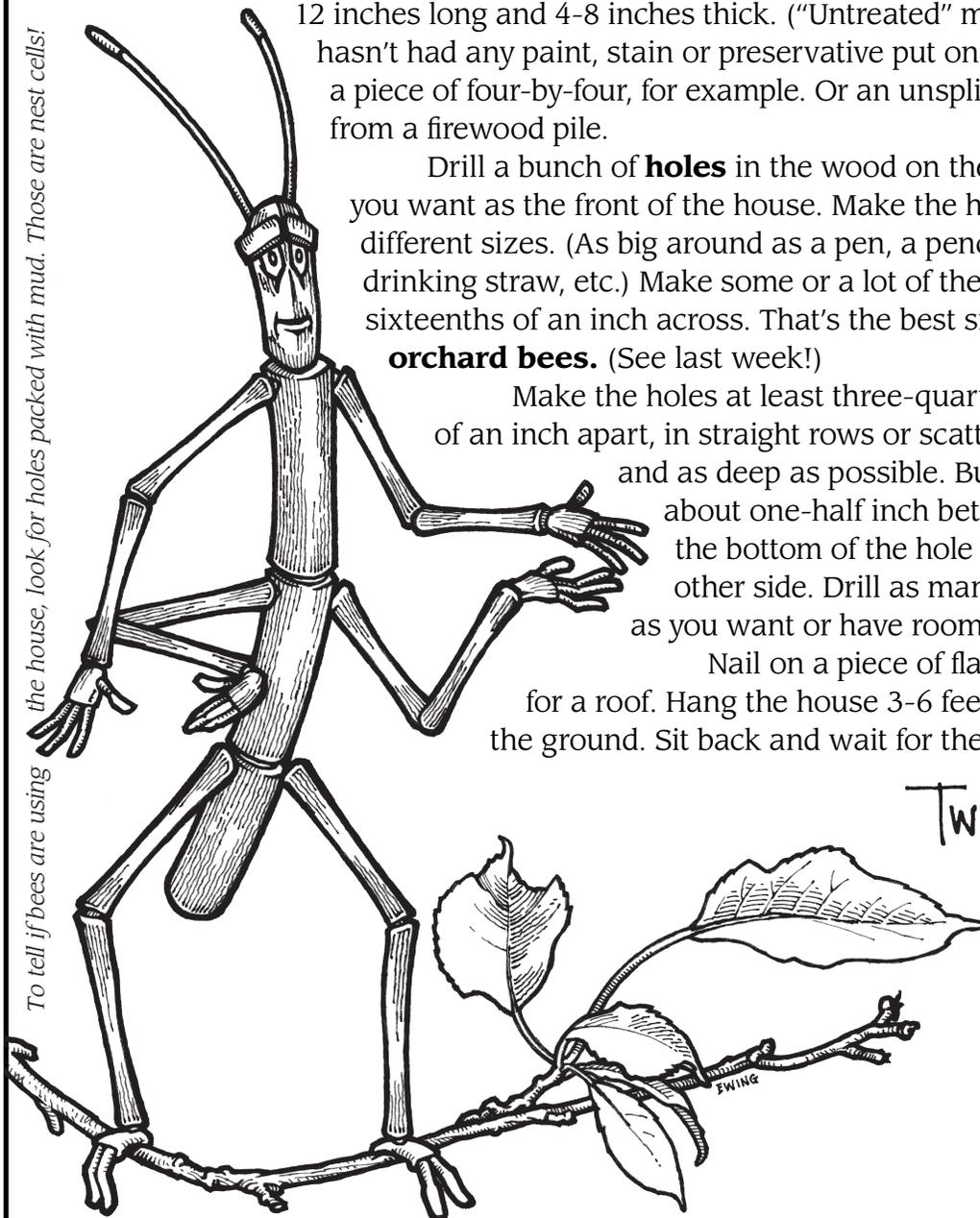
A. Get a piece of **untreated wood** about the size of a loaf of bread. Say, 12 inches long and 4-8 inches thick. ("Untreated" means it hasn't had any paint, stain or preservative put on it.) Try a piece of four-by-four, for example. Or an unsplit log from a firewood pile.

Drill a bunch of **holes** in the wood on the side you want as the front of the house. Make the holes in different sizes. (As big around as a pen, a pencil, a drinking straw, etc.) Make some or a lot of them five-sixteenths of an inch across. That's the best size for **orchard bees**. (See last week!)

Make the holes at least three-quarters of an inch apart, in straight rows or scattered, and as deep as possible. But leave about one-half inch between the bottom of the hole and the other side. Drill as many holes as you want or have room for.

Nail on a piece of flat wood for a roof. Hang the house 3-6 feet off the ground. Sit back and wait for the bees!

To tell if bees are using the house, look for holes packed with mud. Those are nest cells!



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).

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Notes: You might want to get a grownup to help you with the drilling and also, if needed, any sawing. A bee house is actually a block or a log, not a "house" like a bird house (or a people house) with four walls and an empty space inside. See examples at <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Other/note109/note109.html> and <http://habitat.ms11.net/bee/beehome.htm>. Sources included the National Wildlife Federation, <http://www.nwf.org/backyard/beehouse.cfm>; the University of Arizona, <http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/ahb/inf29.html>; and North Carolina State University, <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Other/note109/note109.html>.

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