

Fact Sheets



DIGGER BEES

One interesting group of native bees nest in soil, the digger bees (Family: *Anthrophodidae*). These are solitary bees that individually rear their young within the soil tunnels they construct. Such nesting is restricted to only certain sites found to be optimal, based on features such as slope, aspect, soil type and drainage. As a result, they often appear to occur in “colonies”, often numbering in hundreds. In these colonies, each female is hard at work, digging out the nest cells and collecting pollen for her young, often in very close proximity to many others, giving the appearance of a nest. Digger bees do not have a social structure, as do honeybees or social wasps such as yellow jackets.

The digger bees are also very non-aggressive and will not sting unless handled or trapped in clothing. Even then, their sting is reported to be much milder than that of a honeybee or yellow jacket. (Male bees cannot sting at all). The bees typically on have one generation per year.

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