Day 16: Native Bees

Native Pollinators
Last week we talked about honeybees, today we're going to learn about Native Bees. We often think there is only one type of bee: the honeybee. But the bee we associate with honey and beekeepers, known as the European Honey Bee, arrived aboard European ships around 1622. There are about 3,600 types of bees in the United States, and 20,000 different species of bees Worldwide!

Solitary Bees - Bees come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Some are sociable (like the honey bee), but a majority of bees are solitary. This means they live and work by themselves. Solitary bees like to build nests in small holes where they can safely lay their eggs, such as the Leafcutter bee. If you see a bee flying by with a leaf in its mouth, there's a good chance she is building a nest! Other native bees build their nests underground, such as the Digger Bee! Although Solitary bees don't make honey, they are just as important for flower pollination. 250 Mason bees can do the pollination work of 20,000 honey bees! Although solitary bees are rarely aggressive, if you see a solitary bee remember: they won't bother you if you don't bother them. They are busy gathering food for their family. Solitary bees include: Leafcutter bees, Carpenter bees, Miner bees, and Mason bees, among many many more!

Bee Hotel
Next time you're at Imago, you'll see a “bug hotel,” the hotel is designed for native bees to safely lay their eggs in.
You can actually see them at work laying their eggs in the small holes throughout the hotel! Building homes for native bees is super important because many of these native bees habitats are endangered. If you're cleaning your yard later today, leave hollow reeds or sticks standing on end for native bees to find, they can use these hollow reeds for nesting sites. Click here for a few ideas about how to make your own native bee homes.

Yellow Jackets, Wasps and Hornets
As for bugs such as yellow jackets, hornets, and wasps: these bugs are in a complete league of their own. Wasps, hornets and yellow jackets tend to have slender bodies with narrow waist areas. They usually have shiny, smooth bodies. Bees tend to have more ‘fur,’ and flatter back legs. Wasps back legs tend to hang down when they fly, versus bees, who keep their legs tucked in when they fly.

Keep scrolling to test your knowledge using the information you just learned! Look at each image and try to guess if it is a native bee or a wasp.

Want to learn more about our native bee friends? Check out this awesome website

Journal Prompt: Pretend you are writing an advertisement for a native bee apartment. What kind of features would your native bee home have to entice a bee to move in?

Share your Findings or Creations with us on Facebook and Instagram

Tomorrow's Theme: Trees

Time to explore!
Maura, Mud Quee
Native Bee or Wasp?

Answers are on the next page
### Answers:

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