AgriGate- An International Multidisciplinary e-Magazine

Volume: 03 Issue No: 11

ARTIFICIAL BEE NESTS SERVE AS RESIDING PLACES FOR STEM NESTING BEES

Article ID: AG-VO3-I11-59

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Introduction

Pollination is an essential part of reproduction. Among the different pollinating agents, insects play a crucial role like bees, wasps, flies, beetles, moths, butterflies, ants etc. Among all, bees are considered as important pollinating agents for numerous crops and plant species throughout the ecosystems. They play essential ecosystem services and provide life sustenance. World-wide, there are around 25,000 species of bees, that belong to seven families under super family, Apoidea (Michener, 2007). In India, nearly 1000 bee species are known to occur under six families *viz.*, Apidae, Megachilidae, Andrenidae, Colletidae, Melittidae and Halictidae. Honey bees are commonly used for pollination of crops but, they could not provide satisfactory pollination service to many crops. In fact, native (wild) bees also provide good pollination services and nearly two third of the pollination service is provided by the wild pollinators. Native bees have wide array of sizes, shapes, and colors. They have different life styles, nesting behaviour (*viz.*, soil nesting, stem nesting, cavity nesting etc.,), bee flora, and their season of activity. Wild bees can also supplement honey bees, thus conserving them and their integrated management with honey bees will help to enhance the crop productivity as evidenced in some crop species.

Stem nesting bees

Most bee species build their nests in soil, wood, hollow stems, pithy stems or pre-existing cavities and tunnels abandoned by other wood-boring insects. Nesting resources have an important role in structuring of the bee communities. Many hollow or pithy plant stems and