

Native Bee Obstacle Course Facilitator Guide

Pre-K – 2nd Grade

When groups of younger children ask me to teach about native bees, I like to use Learning Stations that keep kids moving! One that has been very successful for me is what I call the “Native Bee Obstacle Course”.

I create learning stations (number of stations dependent on size of group). I like to finish my lessons with a song and dance about bees. The kids love it!

- **Leafcutter Bee Station** – Leafcutter bees use their mouth to cut leaves to line their nest. Students will carry leaves as fast as they can to their “home”. Materials: 50-100 leaf shapes, plastic tweezers or pinchers, and buckets for bee homes.

Older kids love this video of a Leafcutter Bee making her nest from the Jha Lab at the University of Texas. <https://biodiversity.utexas.edu/news/entry/leafcutter-bee-nest>

- **Bumblebee**– Bumblebees vibrate their body to shake pollen loose from flowers. Students will shake big yellow pollen balls out of a cup. Materials: Yellow pom-pom balls and cups. (I cut foam flower shapes to attach to the top of the cup)
- **Longhorn Bee**- These bees dig tunnels in the ground for their home, and are named for their long antennae. Students will climb through a tunnel like a Longhorn Bee. Materials: Collapsible fabric tunnel, and long antennae.
- **Carpenter Bee**– Carpenter Bees chew tunnels in wood for their nest. Students will “drill” holes in wood (You may need to get creative on this one)
- **Sweat Bee** – Known for their vibrant metallic green color. Students will compare the color of Sweat Bees to other objects. (I print pictures of Sweat bees and vary objects based on age level)
- **Mason Bee** – One of the first bees to emerge in the spring, mason bees in Houston are a beautiful blue color.

I love this Mason Bee Coloring Page activity from The Bees in Your Backyard (and highly recommend their book!) created by Olivia Carril and Joseph Wilson.

Mason Bee Coloring Page: <http://beesinyourbackyard.blogspot.com/2017/01/color.html>