

# SOLITARY BEES – FACT SHEET

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A small area of the playground at the CDC is blocked for a few months because an endangered solitary bee species called “*Halictus scabiosae*” was found. It is prohibited by German law to apply pesticides or destroy the nests of these insects.

## Do I have to be afraid of these insects?

Since solitary bees do not have large nests with a lot of offspring to defend, they are less aggressive than social bees. Although the females are capable of stinging, they only do so if trapped or otherwise threatened.

## Biology

Unlike the honey bee *Halictus scabiosae* belongs to the group of solitary bees that do not live in bee-hives but build smaller nests. *Halictus scabiosae* nest in tunnels they dig in the ground. In spring, several sisters share a common nest. The biggest among them assumes the role of the queen. She remains in the nest and lays eggs, while her sisters leave to gather pollen and nectar. As soon as her infertile daughters hatch and assume the tasks in the community, she drives out her sisters who then build their own nests in the vicinity. In some instances, the bees observed are males flying about their territory; males cannot sting, nor do they make burrows.

## Importance

Solitary bees are extremely beneficial insects because they pollinate many different types of plants. Their burrowing does not harm vegetation and may actually be of service in aerating the soil.



A *Halictus scabiosae* worker returning from her rounds with pollen.



As soon as she unloads her cargo, she returns to work, still dusty with pollen.



Queen bee guarding the entrance to her nest. Only workers are allowed in.



After the daylong pursuit of young females, the *Halictus scabiosae* males gather in the evening for a collective night rest.