

**The Audio Bee Booth is a project of Resonating Bodies—a series of integrated media installations, community outreach projects and a blog which illuminates aspects of Canada's biodiversity through focusing on pollination ecology, with special attention paid to the intersection of native bees, habitat and coevolution of plants and pollinators .**  
([resonatingbodies.wordpress.com](http://resonatingbodies.wordpress.com)).

## Images

Name

Spider Wasp  
Auplopus carbonarius



Name

Sweat Bee  
Agapostemon



Name

Leafcutter Bee  
Megachilidae



Name

Orchard Mason Bee  
Osmia lignaria



Images: Rob Cruickshank, Google Images (2012)

[www.ballsfalls.ca](http://www.ballsfalls.ca)

The Audio Bee Booth is an observable nesting site for wild, solitary bees and wasps. This is not a honey bee hive. Like a condo, it has individual apartments for the many varieties of solitary-nesting bees and wasps native to Ontario. Get up close. While you watch and listen, you might see how the inhabitants vary greatly in size, form, colour and habits; the variety of materials they construct their brood cells from; which kinds of pollen (bees) or insects (wasps) they provide to their eggs; how their young develop; what time of year they are active.

Don't worry, they won't sting unless accidentally trapped in clothing. They don't care about humans (or our food), though they might be shy. The enemies of solitaires are other insects, birds, fungi and micro organisms. Unlike their social cousins the bumble bees, honey bees, paper wasps and yellow jackets, solitaires will not defend their nest sites unless challenged by other insects.

These tunnel nesters are single mothers who live on their own and make nests in old beetle bores in dead wood or in pithy stem such as raspberry bramble (others nest in the ground). The cabinet is passive in that – like a dead or dying tree – it naturally attracts local bees and wasps already foraging for food, mating and hunting for homes in the field and surrounding woods. The booth allows us to spy on their nesting activities and view their relationship with the surrounding habitat. It allows you entry into a world normally inaccessible, yet omnipresent in most rural and urban environments. All of which normally takes place in the dark.

I have a strong conviction that, in order to begin to perceive the connections between our actions and their consequences in the larger context, we need to cultivate our mental image of biodiversity, and that this is best done using all of our senses, outdoors, and immersed in the environment with which we seek to connect. The dynamics of pollination ecology—a cornerstone of the biosphere as well as of our food security—can be more easily perceived and understood through extending our senses, especially when sound is paired with visual observation.

— Sarah Peebles, artist

Assisted by Julie Kee (pyrography), John Kuisma (woodworking) and Rob Cruickshank (electronics).

**Ball's  
Falls**  
CONSERVATION AREA

**Instructions**

# Audio Bee Booth



**An amplified habitat  
installation for solitary  
bees and wasps**

**By Sarah Peebles**

**Sponsored by**



TD Friends of the  
Environment  
Foundation



NIAGARA PENINSULA  
**CONSERVATION**  
AUTHORITY

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## ***Please be gentle***

**View and listen to solitary wasps and bees nesting.**

**Don't keep the doors open too long, they need the dark to grow. Open one door at a time.**

**Use magnifying glass to observe up close and return to cabinet.**

**Close all doors when finished. If you need headphones they can be borrowed from the gift shop.**



## ***How to Listen to Bees***

**Press 'start' to listen.**

**Plug in the headphones.**

**Turn the volume to low.**

**Put on headphones, slowly increase volume to listen. Some bees are quiet, others will be loud.**

**Power will switch off after 10 minutes.**

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## ***Bees live here.***

**There are over 150 types of native bees at Ball's Falls Conservation Area. Native solitary bees do not make honey, wax or live in hives. The females collect pollen, nectar and materials for nests in which they lay eggs in individual cells packed with enough pollen to grow into adults that emerge the following year.**



**They are non-aggressive and do not sting. Solitary bees, wasps and bumble bees are native to Ontario, unlike the European honey bee which was imported during settlement.**

**Native bees have symbiotic relationships which have coevolved with the native plants in this area. Bees compete for flowers, and flowers compete for bees. All types of bees visit flowers for food. This pollination supports genetic diversity, providing stability for both bees and plants. With threats such as improper pesticide use and habitat loss, both bees and plants are affected together. The loss of one affects the other.**

## ***Wasps live here too.***

**Solitary wasps (from whom bees evolved) pollinate less, but provide essential insect control. They hunt for aphids, grasshoppers and other insects which they paralyze and leave with each egg as a food source. Like solitary bees, solitary wasp eggs also overwinter, transforming into adults and emerging the following year. They also have not evolved to be aggressive and do not sting as there is no food to steal!**