



BLUE BANDED BEES NEW HOME

On Thursday, April 4, members of the Green Group at Damascus College Ballarat put the finishing touches to a “bee hotel” for the native blue-banded bees which have been busy around the College grounds for the past year.

Blue-banded bees (*Amegilla* spp.) have shown that they love tomato flowers, but also appear to like the (also introduced) red valerian flowering outside the College staffroom. Native species don't necessarily eschew exotic plants.

Amegilla is different in some important aspects from the introduced honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) we are used to seeing around our flowering plants. It doesn't form large swarms that collect in tree hollows, doesn't produce large amounts of honey and doesn't sting to protect the hive. It digs its nest in dry ground, so the first step of making our “hotel” was a fun one, mixing the best of Damascus College clay into mud to fill lengths of downpipe. These were then air dried, and have now been stacked vertically in the Horticulture area. We will see if the intended tenants take up residence!

If you have blue-banded bees at home, you may like to try your hand at making them welcome. The “hotel” instructions are found by clicking on this [link](#).

David Neate - Green Group teacher

