

Cut It Out!

Have you ever wondered what makes small, circular cutouts in your garden leaves?

The answer could be Leafcutter Bees! Female Leafcutter Bees use their powerful jaws to cut pieces of leaf to line their nests.



Sally Banks

A leafcutter female carries pollen to the nest on the underside of her abdomen. She deposits some in each cell with an egg and then seals the nest with another leaf.

Diverse habitat is important for the 20-25 different species native to Alberta. Depending on the species they will nest in tree cavities, beetle burrows, hollow stems or in the ground.

Due to their solitary nature Leafcutter Bees are hard to study and document. Some species are known from a single specimen, making it difficult to know whether the populations are healthy or not.

These peaceful bees are pollination powerhouses. Their importance in pollination of native plants and in agriculture is often overlooked.

They prefer flowers of the aster and legume families, feeding on fleabane, and vetches, but will also utilize goldenrod, western snowberry, fireweed and others.

You may rarely see the bees as they go about their daily life, but you will likely see the results of their leaf pruning. Don't judge them for the damage, their pollination efforts more than make up for it.



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[Watch Leafcutter Bees
In Action](#)

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