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Heath potter wasp

In the tradition of Devon artisans working in clay, the female of this ingenious insect rolls mud from the clay soils of heathland sites into balls. From around 25 of these balls she then sculpts a 'pot', attached to a stem of heather or grass, with an entrance into which she lays a single egg. This solitary wasp then carries caterpillars to each mud-clay pot to ensure her young have enough food during their larval stage. When she has stuffed the pot with provisions, she seals the hole with more mud. Once the wasp grub has eaten its fill, it will emerge from the pot as an adult. As if each stage of this quarrying and constructing wasn't amazing enough, if the bare earth is too dry when the wasp needs to create her pots, she will ferry water to her 'quarry', to create the mud she needs. DWT's heathland reserves in the Bovey Basin, such as Bovey Heathfield, are important homes for the heath potter wasp. By managing the site to leave areas of bare ground, heather and gorse, and fresh water in close proximity to each other, DWT can ensure this incredible insect continues to thrive here.

Your donation will support this crucial work.