



## *Valuable cargo*

When visiting flowers, solitary bees of the *Tetrapedia* genus are not only looking for pollen. They are specialists at collecting floral oil, which they carry on the bristles of their feet in structures called scopes and use to feed their larvae and build their nests. "Most of the time they collect oil as well as pollen, which is mixed together as they fly," says ecologist Paula Montagnana. Her doctoral dissertation is a study of the effects of the forest canopy on the abundance of these bees in the Cantareira Forest, north of the city of São Paulo. "The forest is important for supplying both food as well as cavities for nests." Unlike the well-known hives built by social bees, these solitary bees use hollows in tree trunks and branches for their nests.

*Photo by Rafael Souza Cruz Alves submitted by Paula Montagnana, doctoral candidate at the Ribeirão Preto Campus of the University of São Paulo (USP)*