

Hornet Home Depot



I know it's risky but I can't help myself, because it is a masterpiece of construction. I don't have an escape route and if they attack me, I'm knackered. To get a closer look I'm gonna have to ford the stream (Pena Creek), which by October is merely a necklace of pools out of which rocks of various sizes are jutting. The chain that connects these Coho-peopled pools and those ancient rocks is a fine, filigreed waterway. I will attempt to skip from rock to rock and I hope I don't miscalculate my leaps.

Hornets are not renowned for their hospitality, and certainly uninvited visitors are typically escorted out of the neighborhood by a posse of stinging sentinels. But I need to admire their architecture and their construction skills from closer up. From here I can see that they have used only local materials; indeed that paper pulp that they've employed is from the bark of the two adjacent willow saplings to which the structure is attached. The nest is about 18 inches in height and shaped like an inverted pear, with the bottom being about six inches across and the top about 14 inches. The exterior is textured in a wave-like pattern almost as if it's an imitation of the rippling brook 12 feet below.

It's time to go across for a closer inspection; wish me luck!

I'm back, unscathed, but I need to make a correction to my initial observations. The nest is actually anchored to three willow saplings - little ones, about three inches in diameter. It is cemented to two of these with an elegantly watertight bonding agent, and the third sapling is fully embedded in the structure like a steel beam running up the backbone of a skyscraper.

The residents are rather quiet, though I've seen a few come and go. The entry way is shaped more like a figure of 8 lying on its side than an O. Maybe it's a one-way system with entrance and exit written in Hornetish.

It's the ultimate in ecological building - local materials, low transport costs, owner labor and no mortgage. If I had a vote I'd elect hornets onto the Sonoma County Planning Commission.

Ciao! I'm headed on upstream.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Tír na nÓg
July, 2014