

# Our Friend, The Mason Bee



Learn more about these fuzzy friends and how to attract them to your backyard or schoolyard habitat! For more resources on creating wildlife-friendly spaces, visit the National Wildlife Federation's Garden for Wildlife page at: [www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife](http://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife)

Mason bees are different from the other bees we often think of. Here are some ways to identify a mason bee!

- Shiny, dark blue-green color
- Active in early spring, between March and May
- About the same size as honey bees



IDENTIFYING

NESTING



Mason bees build nests in small cracks or holes, using clay or mud – But they can't make their own holes, so that's why we like to provide houses for them!

Mason bees don't live in colonies and typically buzz around alone, but they like to be close to their friends when they nest.

Mason bees are amazing pollinators and usually pollinate 95% of the flowers they visit. In western Oregon, they are one of the first active pollinators in spring!

Gardeners love them because they are especially good at pollinating fruit trees like apples, cherries, and pears.



POLLINATING

LIFE CYCLE



Did you know female mason bees have control over which of her eggs becomes male or female?

Male mason bees hatch first, out of eggs that are laid within the first 3 inches of the nest hole. Females hatch after males, from eggs that are laid further than 3 inches from the nest hole.



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# Caring for Your Mason Bee Condo



## Spring

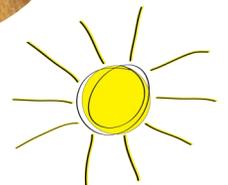
### Place Cocoons at Nesting Site

- Hang the condo under a tree or eave for weather protection and ~6-7 feet above the ground facing southern or eastern sun.
- Make sure there are spring flowering plants nearby as a nectar and pollen food source for the bees.
- Female bees need moist clay/mud for their nest. If you don't already have clay soil, set out a container/small pile of mud and wet half of it.



Hey,  
thanks!

## Summer



### Storing Filled Nesting Tubes/Blocks

- In late May and June, adults have stopped feeding and the young bee larvae are developing inside the cocoons.
- Mud-capped tubes can stay outside, but more bees may survive if the tubes are moved to a protected container, like a sealed paper bag, cardboard box, or plastic box with air holes.
- Then store the container in a garage or well-ventilated shed for the summer.



## Winter

### Monitor Developing Bees

- Keep an eye on your developing bees and make sure they are not getting too cold. Steady cool temperatures (~40°F) help the bees conserve their energy for spring!



## Fall



### Prepare for Next Season By Making New Tubes

- While your young bees are developing inside their cocoons during the summer and fall, prepare new paper tubes [\(see crafting instructions\)](#).

### **Additional Resources**

- ⇒ [Build a Bee House – National Wildlife Federation](#)
- ⇒ [Mason Bee Condo For Kids - National Wildlife Federation](#)

Photo Credit: 1. Beatriz Mojsset, Pollinators Blog; 2. Diane Hoffmaster, DIY Mason Bee House to Help Save the Pollinators!