

Replacement Tubes for the MASON BEE NESTER KIT

USE: These replacement tubes are for the Orcon Mason Bee Nester Kit. When one or more of the tubes in your Nester has been used, it can be replaced with one of the tubes enclosed. These tubes are designed to be just the right diameter that the bees look for, and generally not the size that other insects use. The tubes are a 2 part design: the thicker outer layer insulates and protects from predator mites. The inner tube is translucent to allow for observation.

INSTALLATION: Just slide out one of the tubes that has been used and slide in one of the new tubes. Be sure the end with the black plug goes in first so that the open end is facing out. After eggs have been deposited in the tube and the Mason Bee has sealed the opening with mud, you can carefully remove the plug at the end of the tube and the inner tube will slide out with the plug. By periodically holding the tube up to the light, you can observe the progress of the new bees as they hatch, feed on the pollen and nectar that was left for them, and finally make a cocoon to live in through the winter. When not observing the bees, the inner tube should be replaced back in the outer tube for protection.

MASON BEE LIFE CYCLE: Mason Bees will normally begin to appear in early spring, usually in March or April depending on location. They mate soon after emerging from their home and immediately begin their search

for pollen and nectar. The females will also begin looking for a new home. If she finds a tube or beetle boring that has previously been used, she will first clean it out. If she finds a nester tube, she will use it immediately.

She will start by going to the back of the tube and laying an egg, depositing some pollen and nectar for food, and building a wall to create a cell. This wall building is why they are called Mason Bees. She repeats this process about 10 times, creating a cell for each egg. This activity usually continues through June, then they will begin dying. But the eggs are now hatching and eating the food that was left for them. The larvae go through their entire cycle inside each individual cell, molting 4 to 5 times. Around August they will spin a cocoon and begin gradually developing into an adult Mason Bee.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Mason Bees are often referred to as solitary bees because they do not have a social order like honey bees and bumble bees. They do not have a queen or a hive and they do not make honey. However, they are perfectly happy making a nest right next to each other.

Mason Bees are such effective pollinators because they have a lot of hair on their body which picks up pollen. They even have special sacs to store the pollen. Also, unlike honeybees which clean themselves after each visit to a flower and lose 90% of the pollen, the Mason Bees carry all of their pollen from flower to flower.

Mason Bees tend not to sting because they are not a social bee and do not have a hive or a queen to protect. The only way to get one to sting is to squeeze it, and even then it probably won't sting.

Fortunately Mason Bees are not susceptible to the Varroa mite which has caused such havoc with honey bees all over north America.



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Mason Bees	Ladybug House
Mason Bee Nest	
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