




September 2013 Bee-Mail 



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Spring bees are nearing their adult stage



Spring and early summer bees overwinter as adult bees. They've spun their cocoon, rested a bit, and now are expending a huge amount of energy in metamorphous shifting from larva to adult bee. If you were to open a cocoon, you might find the bees look like this picture. Eggs that were laid in the early part of the spring are nearly all developed and are black/blue in color (blue orchard or hornfaced) and completely formed. With the span of development between eggs laid in early March to last eggs laid in Early June, these later bees have to develop quickly or die. A partially completed bee will not survive the winter. What's going on? As we encourage gardeners to spread their cocoons over several weeks in the spring to achieve maximum pollination, we're playing with nature slightly. There could be a difference in development as large as 10-12 weeks.

What to do:

There is new research that we followed last year and are passing on to you. *Consider "cold shocking" your developing bees.*

In about two-three weeks, place all tubes or nesting material in a cold environment (45-50F, 7-10C degrees) for about one day and then bring them back to normal temperature for a week. Do it again a week later.

Research suggests that the complete bees slow their metabolism and slow the high consumption of store fats. The under-developed bees accelerate their development. Awesome research! We thank Gordon Wardell of Paramount Farms for this concept. It's not factual science yet, but our observations and resultant healthy bees last spring attest to this process as something Crown Bees will do to our mason bees.

All bees should head to hibernation on or before October 1st. We'll remind you next month.

A peculiarity of Leafcutters

Hundreds of gardeners tried raising leafcutter bees this summer. This takes a bit of patience as the bees must shift from larva to adult during the summer. I found waiting for the bees to emerge frustrating...

The bees that we sell are raised in Saskatchewan and perform extremely well in hot weather. They are of European descent and are found in almost all states/provinces today. They are considered naturalized like the hornfaced mason bee.

It has taken 2 months for some bees to emerge in cooler climates like western Washington. Others in warmer climates had the bees emerge in 4-6 weeks.

In really warm weather, a second season can occur! Although this isn't preferable, eggs laid can shift to larva quickly, and then because it's so warm, they don't stop and continue developing into adult bees emerging 4 weeks later.

Unfortunately, the eggs laid from these bees rarely survive to the following summer. It's possible they don't develop into strong enough larva to sustain themselves through hibernation.

What to do:

If your leafcutter bees completed their flying season and it's still in the high 80's – 90's, place the bees in a cooler environment. Consider places like under your house, on the north wall, or inside your house.


Crownbees.com version 5 is live!



Our website was hacked about 7 weeks ago which pulled it off line for a week. Every dark cloud has a silver lining... and I am grateful to have been hacked. 😞 This forced us to rebuild the website into something more powerful with some really fun/new features.

All of our content was retained/updated and arranged to easily find (we hope.) You'll see two menus, the upper has the “how to” content, and the lower menu just product. I'll be blogging more often on the website. We'll be introducing video blogs as well.

Some fun features:

- **BeeView** ~  wherever you see this image, hover your mouse over it. Our fun and/or odd humor comes out... what might a bee be thinking about this page? We also invite you to come up with your own suggestions/thoughts. See the BeeView on the home page.
- **Tracking your mason bee data** ~ We have a “My account” section on the menu. We encourage you to add how many cocoons you harvested in 2013 and make notes here. Each year we'll add new fields. When you track your progress, you are able to gain better success. What went right/wrong that year? We encourage you to think through what data pieces you'd like us to add.
- **Accordion sidebars** ~ hovering your mouse over these has you seeing snippets of information. Click on “read more” to get the whole article.
- **Our shopping cart** is much more intuitive and significantly more robust. We're really pleased with its layout and capabilities for you. We now have tabs to differentiate instructions vs. descriptions. Our products can now be rated. Your opinion matters to us!
- **BeeGAP Speaker's Bureau** (see below)

- **Affiliate capability** ~ websites that link to us gain rebates. If interested in participating, send us an email.

You might be surprised at how inexpensive this entire rewrite was. If you'd like to be introduced to our website developer, reach out to me. He is smart, intuitive, and fast... With all sincerity, please critique the website. If you find a grammatical error, a picture that isn't linked (you see no picture), or can't find something easily, please let us know. We'll look to change things immediately. This website is designed to help *you* be successful!

Announcing a partnership with NGC



This May, Crown Bees entered into a partnership with the US's largest garden network to help teach them about gentle mason bees. This organization has over 175,000 members across North and Central America.

These gardener members are proactive about the environment and love to garden... two great combinations that will help the public learn about bee awareness and solutions to our challenged bees.

Under the leadership of Linda Nelson, their new president, she has championed the two year theme of "Making a World of Difference; Choices Matter." Her administration will introduce initiatives to promote education with a focus on protecting natural resources. ...with bees as part of those vital resources.

We look forward to helping her organization meet this progressive program with the Speakers Bureau, educational programs, and other messaging platforms.

Introducing the BeeGAP Speakers Bureau

Many gardeners and orchardist nation wide would like to learn about natives. Until now, Crown Bees has only been able to teach to just a few regional nurseries and events in the Seattle Metro area. We know of a few other teammates who speak in other states as well. (Thanks Denise (VA) and Randy (NC) and a multitude of others in OR/WA.)

In the next month, Crown Bees will finalize presentations that will be relevant to the various regions of the country. In our partnership with the National Garden Club, we should have thousands of their club members able to present this material.

Clubs, communities, and classrooms should be able to request a speaker to present this material to an audience. These presenters will have a lot of material at their hands to be successful, but may not know every mason bee nuance! (Rather, we'll encourage the speakers to point to our website for most answers.)

Speaking is not limited to just the NGC. If you are interested in speaking to various clubs, community events, classrooms, or nurseries, please read this [link](#) and connect with us. We also have provided incentives to help you succeed. This portion of our website is under development and should be completed shortly.

“Houston... we have a problem.”

Ok, this is a good problem, but nonetheless, a huge dilemma.



We will help teach the National Garden Club’s 175,000 gardeners about mason bees and other native bees this fall/winter. We also may be teaming with nurseries across North America significantly more than in previous years.

This is all good news. More gardeners are going to be learning what you already know; that you can raise gentle bees to pollinate your yard and garden.

The downside is that we will now face a serious deficit of spring mason bee cocoons, both western and eastern, blue orchard and hornfaced.

We will be reaching out to you in the next few months. If you have been successful with raising these wonderful bees, please consider sharing them with us, and thus to your community gardeners as well.

We will be exchanging nesting material for excess cocoons, and if necessary, buy them from you. [Read more.](#)

We will not raise the cost of mason bees. Rather, we want to keep these bees affordable for gardeners nationwide to try out.

Please do not buy western bees for states east of the Rockies. Bees live in areas that they are acclimated to. Bringing in bees from outside an area introduces virus/diseases that weren’t there before. Please be ethical with your purchasing. Mason bees are native and can be trapped locally in most parts of North America.

The OBA symposium in Salt Lake City



The professional Orchard Bee Association continues to grow.

This year, OBA will have a three day symposium near Salt Lake City on October 10-12 at the Utah State Education Center.

The intent of this team of collaborative international researchers, pollinators, bee producers, and “mason bee enthusiasts” is to accelerate the use and understanding of solitary bees in orchards.

Through teamwork with the USDA/ARS/Logan Bee Lab and key players within OBA, the symposium has expanded beyond “research and standards development” to include a public session as well on Saturday.

The flier for this session can be found [here](#). Seating is limited, but the costs are low. If you are interested in attending all three days, do sign up. Hotel accommodation suggestions are covered in the flier as well.

You can sign up for the event [here](#).

I won't miss this event. The teammates here are brilliant, fun to meet with, and dedicated to providing alternative pollination solutions to orchards across the globe.

In our next issue...

- More about the BeeGap Speakers Bureau
- How to harvest (This is extremely important!!!)

Thank you for caring about raising solitary mason bees! Your success is important to us.

Dave Hunter, Owner