



February 2014 Bee-Mail

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What's new for 2014?

- [What's going on with your hibernating bees](#)
- [3 Bee Buy Back success stories](#)
- [Review of nesting materials, what's needed and what to do](#)
- [Bee-Mail and a "newbees" crash course](#)
- [BeeGAP Speakers Bureau is taking off!](#)

Your hibernating bees ~ still snoozing

Spring Bees



All spring bees are surviving on their stored fats. It's possible to wake them up,

but they'll be slow to emerge. (The almond industry is preparing their 500,000 mason bees for a February 15th release)

The bees have about 1/3 to 1/4 of their stored fats remaining. If you have your bees stored outside, be wary of warm days that will pre-emerge your bees before you want them emerging. When you store them in your fridge, you are in charge of when they emerge.

Our [HumidiBees](#) can hold about 80 tubes or 1,500 loose cocoons. Be sure to keep them hydrated in your fridge. (add 1 tbl spoon or so of water) If not in your fridge, keep them in the coolest place possible, but still away from rodents. Check for mold... here's an [easy solution](#).

Summer Bees & beneficial wasp larva

- These are still in larva form. Keep their metabolisms low as well. Store them in the fridge along with the summer bees. (or that cool spot outside.)



Three Bee Buy Back Success Stories

Many of your [BeeGAP](#) teammates across the nation have shared their bees with us. Some interesting things have occurred due to this teaming...

BeeGAP teammates of yours from various parts of the country have given us sufficient numbers to now offer “**Regional acclimated bees**” in the Pacific NW, Southwest, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Virginia. When buying bees, you should purchase bees acclimated similar to your environment.

Several items impact their success rate.

1. Bees acclimated to warm summers develop best in warm environments. If you were to buy bees acclimated to cooler summers, they will develop too quickly and begin burning through valuable fats in the late summer/fall. They typically then die mid-winter as their stored fats run out.
 2. Bees accustomed to long winters burn their fats at a slower pace and thus have enough fat to survive long winters.
 3. We have bees that should do well around you. See our “[Which bee is best for your state](#)” chart before choosing bees.
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Blueberry bees were found!

Marlene of Provo, UT shared her excess bees with us a few weeks ago. We noticed they had green “mud caps” instead of normal mud, but their cocoons looked similar to the blue orchard. 🤔

We sent off a few cocoons to the Logan Bee Lab for identification. Dr. Cane was extremely pleased to report we had found the *Osmia ribifloris*, a blueberry-loving bee, in such abundance. [Read more about this bee.](#) (it’s actually quite a remarkable bee.)

We have a small number of these bees available. They require a VERY unusual type of plant available for their nesting material. (They chew up sticky plants using this in lieu of mud.) *We need gardeners that buy these bees to be successful.* Only buy this bee if you live in the correct geography **AND** have the right plants nearby.

We want to propagate these bees to later shift them to blueberry farmers. We’ll keep supplying Marlene with free reeds to help her out!



Malia- young budding entomologist buzzing about bees.

Chris taught her neighbor’s daughter, Malia, about mason bees and helped her raise them. Malia learned, became successful, and sent her excess bees to us.

She received a bunch of free tubes and a check for her efforts.

She has said she wants to become an entomologist. We hope she does! [View the larger pictures](#). Look closely at her jacket and this second picture.



Why more holes than bees?

How many holes do you need for your bees?

What's the difference between paper tubes, reeds, and wood trays?

How should you set them up best for your bees?

What do I do with drilled blocks of wood?

So many questions to answer!

You always want more holes than bees. If there aren't enough holes available, your bees will fly elsewhere.

It's that simple. We believe you should at least one hole per cocoon as a minimum.

All natural holes work best... avoid plastic as the excess moisture from pollen needs to wick elsewhere. You can get moldy cocoons otherwise. Paper tubes are lowest cost, mason bees like reeds best, and wood trays retain the nesting scent each year and are easiest to harvest from. [Review our comparison here](#).



We are introducing **teasel** later this month. We have a really cool story about why... but since the teasel isn't in our shop yet, you'll have to wait until next month! *You might call this a teasel tease?* 😊



Setting nesting material in place: Solitary bees do not

like symmetry. It's not natural to them. Pull some tubes out, place sticks, pencils, or something fun between a few tubes/reeds so that bees can find their hole easily. (My hole is just to the left of the pencil...)

If you have a drilled block of wood or bamboo holes, you are making a mistake. Avoid these. Now is the time to switch from these death traps to something that you can harvest from. [Read more here.](#)

Introducing a NewBee crash course!

First... I'd like your honest opinion about Bee-Mail. This takes us a day to write and I think it might be too long at times. However, we really want you successful and think through each section purposely. Please respond to this Bee-Mail. What do you like, what don't you like? We're listening!

As mason bees gain in popularity, hundreds of new readers are signing up each month.

We thought through how we can we bring these readers up-to-date quickly and developed this **"NewBee" Crash Course:**

- All new readers will now receive a 9-day mini course on mason bee basics.
- Every other day, "NewBees" will get a short email that provides an overview of key topics.
- How do you best use the Crown Bees website? What's a mason bee? What does a house do and how do you set it up best? What about nesting material, and mud? What is BeeGAP? Etc.

If you have a friend who is interested in mason bees, please help them [sign up](#) now. If you, the faithful reader, want to see these quick lessons (but you're already signed up and it's too late to receive them), click here. We have them all in one place to read.

The BeeGAP speakers program is really taking off...



Talk about a successful start! We have multiple BeeGAP speakers that have begun teaching others. The National Garden Club, Inc members across the nation are stepping up. We also have about a dozen non-NGC speakers teaching youth and their community. As we have just started this program, we're honestly not sure how best to implement a calendar with locations and times. I suggest it's too late this year to put this in place. Next year we'll have something on our website that will help you find a presentation nearby. Not only will you hear a presentation in person, but you'll meet BeeGAP teammates near you. We hope this will bring about neighborhood harvesting parties for better community involvement!

We'll be recording a presentation I'll be giving at the Northwest Flower and Garden show this Friday and have that online by the end of this month.

An Invitation to Join our Speakers Bureau

Are you interested in helping teach others? [Read more here](#). We'll help you gain compensation through our coupon program.