




CrownBees

BeeMail Newsletter

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NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK



We've been excited to share our slow but steady design transformations!

In the coming year we will be updating our website, our product labels and many other visual elements of the company.

As you already know, we are also bringing in new products, like the **BeeHaven**, which allows us to touch a wider audience with its low price-point.

Although these may seem like big changes, our focus, intent, and mission are exactly the same. We look forward to taking this journey with you!

MONTHLY REMINDERS

✓ **Our monthly reminder...** Add some water into your **HumidiBee** so your adult bees in their cocoons don't dry out. A tablespoon or so is fine. *We are doing this to keep the mason bee metabolism low to preserve their stored fats for longer winters, or in the case of too hot summers last year where they might have used stored fats in the late fall.*



Moldy cocoons?

Mold is an airborne spore that originates from a local source such as cheese or produce and spreads to other living things—elsewhere, such as nearby cheese, moldy grapes, etc. Natural airflow in a refrigerator may transport mold to your hibernating cocoons. While this may be unsightly, it won't harm your sleeping bees.

What to do

Simply wash your cocoons in a bath of 1 TBL bleach to 1 cup of cold water for a minute or so. Rinse them in cold water, pat them dry and place them back into the HumidiBee. You may want to wash the lower pads in the same rinse. If this is a repeating pattern, consider placing the HumidiBee in a paper lunch sack.

Leafcutter bees should be in a cool garage/shed, not in your refrigerator. If leafy cocoons get mold on them, it's tough to clean them off. Your leafcutter bees are pupa right now and need high warmth to get them to develop into bees. They are fine in a slightly cool place today.

WEATHER IMPACT

It seems like we continue to have abnormal weather in the winters. Flooding in the south and record December heat in the NE. What happens to our native bees in these moments?

I queried an entomologist forum yesterday and it seems that, while not formally studied, a few scientists believe that ground-nesting bees that seal their pollen/egg chambers with leafy bits or mud probably survive fine in floods because there is an air pocket in that chamber. Bumble bees would most likely perish.

Hole nesting bees are probably fine as the holes they found are typically higher in the air like in tree bark or house siding (or your mason bee tubes/reeds/wood trays).



COCOON INVENTORY

You've harvested your cocoons and have a rough count of your success. How many holes will you need in the spring?

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Here's a rule of thumb that we follow. "About 1 hole for each cocoon." If you've maxed out your mason bee house, it's time to either get another



house or encourage a friend to join you with adding bees back to your neighborhood.

If you have more than 500 mason bees at your house, consider spreading them out so they won't compete for their pollen/nectar. Again, placing extra cocoons and a house at friend's house is a great way to teach others the wonders of mason bees.

If you have unfortunately purchased a house with bamboo holes or drilled a block of wood for mason bees, strongly consider not using them as they are mason bee cemeteries due to your inability to harvest cocoons in the fall to separate pests from bees. In particular, pollen mites survive in the holes and are reintroduced to your yard by piggybacking on your emerging mason bees. You now have more pollen mites than normal, which results in more bees lost the following season. It's a vicious circle that you are creating for your bees!

If you did get bees to nest in them last year, consider shifting your bees to nest in a better house. By placing the old holes in a closed box/paper bag with the a few pencil-sized holes in the sides, your bees will typically leave the old holes, crawl out of the bag/box and nest in your better holes. The old holes in the bag/box should be positioned with the holes facing up.





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Again, sharing your extra cocoons and bee-house at friend's home is a great way to teach others the wonders of mason bees.

If you have purchased a house with bamboo holes or drilled a block of wood for mason bees, *strongly* consider not using them.



They are mason bee cemeteries simply because of the inability to harvest cocoons in the fall and separate pests from bees.

Additionally, pollen mites survive in the holes and are reintroduced to your yard by piggy-backing on your emerging mason bees. Which means you now have more pollen mites than normal, and it results in more bees lost the following season.

It's a vicious circle that can be created. If you did get bees to nest in bamboo holes or blocks of wood from the previous year, consider shifting your bees to nest in a better house and nesting materials.

We'll tell you how to solve this in the March issue.

WHAT MAKES US TICK?

As Crown Bees continues to grow every January we ensure that we revisit why we're in business.

- We have to be ethical with all we say, do, and sell.
- We have to tell the truth always.
- If we learn anything new, we provide that information for free.
- We continually reinvent our products. Do they all work for the bees? Can we do something better? Today we're all about mason bees. In the future we will still be "all about mason bees" and add sustainable



products. Our bat house (next section) is a good example.

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BAT HOUSES

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We finally have our **Bat Habitat ready for sale**. We are partnering with a wonderful

woodshop in Montana and have just 20 houses on our shelves today.

Why is a bee company caring about bats? Nature should have a balance of prey and predators. Without bats, we'd have more evening insects. Unfortunately, our scares of "Dracula" and *tales of rabid bats* have most people shy away from these awesome nocturnal mammals. This is similar to "all bees sting" and "all bees produce anaphylactic shock."

There's enough truth in both statements that has us be afraid of bats and bees, but we need to look at the whole picture. Most bats are healthy, they don't want to get caught in hair, and they are definitely more scared of us than we are of them.

Bats' homes have been displaced in recent years because of our neighborhoods pushing them out, providing this habitat for them is a great way to help support our beautiful and delicate ecosystem.

Try putting up a bat habitat now. By spring, any scents that would deter the bats from homing will have worn off and the local bats will have come out of hibernation to look for their new summer home.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Busy-at-Home

Simplifying Food, Family, DIY and Home & Garden



We recently had a lovely write-up in a substantial blogger website (see images for link).

We are delighted to see the "buzz" around our products and company!

Please visit Glenda Embree's website *Busy-at-Home.com* and check out the article she wrote about us and the give-away she had with our products.

Here's a small blurb from her website:

"Crown Bees, is taking a common sense approach to restoring bee health and numbers; garden-by-garden, city-by-city, state-by-state and country-by-country, they're getting individual home gardeners involved. Their mission is to educate all of us about raising gentle, native Mason and Leafcutter Bees and to provide information, supplies and bees to help us get started in our own back yards. This is the project I'm so excited to share with my grandkids!"

SOCIAL MEDIA - Why it's Important & How you can help!



into beautiful pictures, words, and “infographics,” where one picture tells a complete story.

These are getting shared, tweeted and forwarded to many people who are unaware that gentle bees exist.

2. We’re beginning to find “influencers” who have a bigger reach than Crown Bees. They are beginning to understand our story and spread the word. It’s not just about we sell, but also about what we’re doing to make a difference to the world.

3. Lastly, people are beginning to learn that bees are vital to our food supply. Our tweets, posts, and infographics are being spread to others.

Please be part of this exciting time and help us spread the word in any way you can. Share bee-mails with friends. Let others see the infographics Danielle has created. If you write blogs, tweet, or post, consider sharing your story.

Thank you!

CROWN BEES IN BOX-STORES



Touching big box stores soon...

We're in talks with some large box companies to sell the BeeHaven as a simple house *with bees*.

The companies are considering this product that would be placed next to butterfly and ladybug houses or ant farms. They may also place them next to their seeds and plant sections.

Here's why this matters

We have enough leafcutter bees because that industry which pollinates alfalfa seed has been around for 60+ years. We

have few mason bees, which are vital for our fruit and nut orchards as well as spring gardens.

While the *BeeHaven* has leafcutter bees rather than mason bees, it will create an awareness that there are gentle bees in the world.

Hopefully, as the customer redeems their certificate on our website, they'll sign up for Bee-Mail which will open their eyes to mason bees, as well as help them succeed with the summer leafcutter bees. More eyes, more word-spreading, more children learning that "not all bees sting," and more people potentially using less toxic chemicals in their yard!

We're learning that big-box companies can take a year to get a product to their shelves. Which is fine by us :)

CONNECT WITH US!

Help us create awareness and positive change!

- ✓ Visit our website www.CrownBees.com
- ✓ Use the attached images to share



- ✓ Call 1.425.949.7954

Based in Woodinville, Washington, we are a company that's trying to make an impact, learn, solve a looming food shortage problem, and bring light to important sustainable topics.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

♥ The Crown Bees Team

Dave, Debbie, Charlie, Tim, Marci, and Danielle

JOIN THE MOVEMENT


CrownBees