



March 2015 Bee-Mail



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Setting up your nesting house

Your mason bee house is up and facing the morning sun.

It's on a non-moving wall, tree, or stout branch. Now, let's set up the nesting holes...

Here's a quick lesson on setting up the holes ~ You are with a friend and pointing out which apartment is yours. Which building would be easier to point out your space?



Your mason bees are no different.

When placing out your nesting holes, think about this from the bee's perspective.

Each bee claims a hole in which to lay her eggs. When she returns to the nest after foraging, she sometimes gets confused and busily flies in and out of holes until she finds her selected one. A unique layout helps her navigate to her own "apartment" quickly.



In this photo to the left, we find the reeds are used first, then the EasyTear tubes. Each reed is unique. EasyTear tubes, less so.

If you use tubes, don't leave them uniform and perfectly stacked.

The mason bee needs more diversity to find her hole. Pull a few tubes in or out to make a 3-D look, and add a couple of sticks between them.

We use a similar technique with our reusable wood trays. The openings are lightly burnished to create a unique look. We also make a few of the trays a bit longer to get that 3-D effect. It's all about helping the bee find her hole to lay her eggs.

When placing the InvitaBee attractant, just use one of the two scent-impregnated sheets. Position it among the nesting holes so that about half of it hangs in the air. A few weeks later, add the other sheet on top of the holes. Leave both in place for the rest of the season.



How to place out your mason bee cocoons

What to look for before placing out your mason bees:

Daytime temperatures are holding in the low 50's F (10°C). You've checked the weather forecast and see that there's no impending long, stormy weather approaching.

You have pollen showing up in your yard. Remember, mason bees are generalists and

gather pollen from dandelions, tulips, and fruit/nut trees.

Just because it's warm outside does not mean that you *must* place out your cocoons. You're in charge of when to do this. If kept in cold refrigeration, your mason bees should be able to last until early May in their hibernation.



If your mason bees emerge in your refrigerator

This says your refrigerator might have been set too warm. 34°F (1°C) is optimal for bees. If bees emerge, it is because they ran out of stored fats and are hungry. A short term solution is to lightly soak a couple of cotton swabs with 50/50 honey/water, Karo corn syrup/water, or hummingbird feeder nectar/water. Gently place the bees on the cotton balls and close up your HumidiBee. Place the HumidiBee into a lunch sack to keep the bees in darkness. Relax... your emerged bees can last for 6-7 weeks like this.

Check on your bees every couple of weeks. You may need to add more liquid to the cotton swabs.

When to place your bees

If you only have 10-20 cocoons, wait until late March or April to place them out, unless you are specifically pollinating a blooming tree. Warmer weather is better for your bees. If you have lots of mason bees, spread their emergence over a period of weeks. Place some out soon, wait a few weeks, place another third out, and then wait a few more weeks and place out the last cocoons. Ensure you have both large (female) and small (male) cocoons in each group.

Where to place your bees

In a natural setting, your bees will emerge from a hole and memorize where they came from. Since you have harvested your cocoons, you're trying to copy this situation. Rather than placing each cocoon in a hole, simply toss the cocoons over the top of your nesting holes or behind the holes. Bees will emerge, crawl over the holes, and know they came from that area.

If you are concerned about wind, placing cocoons in a small cup or box with the lid open behind or on top of the holes will keep the cocoons in place. For bird protection, hang chicken wire or 3/4" hardware cloth over the front of your mason bee house. Leave about 3" of distance between the wire and the holes.



Mud... one last notice

Here's the mantra: No mud, no mason bees. It's that simple.

Even if your mason bees do well at your house, DIG A HOLE NEARBY. The mason bees prefer to excavate their optimal mud from the sidewall of a hole or bank. We see them go into mouse holes for this mud.

Although you don't need perfect mud, if your soil is mostly sand or loamy, you should strongly consider finding some mud nearby or purchasing some [dry mud](#) from us. Mix it with some of your soil and keep it moist.

The lack of mud is the number one reason mason bees will leave and not nest in yards or orchards.

Crowd funding for a Bee Booster Network



Crown Bees intends to make a difference with how we raise our food worldwide through the use of the super-pollinating mason bee. We believe gardeners should be aware of who else around them is involved with raising bees, growing food, and creating an ecologically sustainable landscape.

We also want you aware of nearby pea patches, public gardens, organizations and nurseries that support these endeavors.

We have a website platform that we call "chapter 1", or "pre-crowd fund." It's the website beewithme.net which shows who's already active with us. Essentially, it's a ghost of what "chapter 2" will look like. We're actively modifying this right now to prepare it for the campaign...

We are conducting an Indiegogo crowd funding campaign that starts March 18th to develop Chapter 2.

Through BeeWithMe.net, we intend to create a more sustainable environment for our future.

The purpose of this new website is *to foster communities of people with a common interest to:*

- *Share experiences and knowledge*
- *Build ecologically sustainable backyards*
- *Influence their local communities to Bee Active*

- *Be funded and powered by the communibees*

The mason bees will be the backbone of this new online community.

I need your help.

This campaign will be run for six weeks starting March 18th. Weekly we'll send out a small update that tells you how we're doing, what's new, and a bit more of the campaign. Please forward this to your network.

Two of the six updates will have the regular Bee-Mail in it. I'll ensure the subject line is easy to identify.

What we're going to do is important. We will change how our world gets much of its food.

Your voice matters.
The people you know matters.
Help us spread the word.



Stay tuned. We're going to have some fun!

AMA with Dave Hunter on Reddit

If you haven't tried out [Reddit](#), it's quite unique and very popular. Reddit is a platform that allows you to network with people on whatever topic you'd like.

In particular, there's a neat session to dialogue with experts. Bill Gates, for example, conducted an AMA (Ask Me Anything) reddit session last year. Talk about connectivity!



I will be conducting an AMA session on March 28th about 9am pst. If you'd like to talk about anything mason bees, BeeWithMe, how we intend to change pollination practices, feel free to chat with me.

Have fun with  and voting. If you like someone's comment vote up. If not, vote down!

You will find the active session by typing crownbees in the search bar.

Do you have a video or picture of you with mason bees?



In our crowdfunding video, we have a 20 second clip where we'll be showing gardeners who raise mason bees.

If you have a small video clip (10 seconds?) or picture of you with your mason bees. (we'd like to see people, not just the bees), please send it to me at info@crownbees.com.

We need this quickly please! (By this Sunday, March 1st).

Thanks!

In the News!

Mason bees are starting to be found in the news. We have had a few articles written about the bees and our business vision.

Here are a couple of links:

- [Seattle Met](#) (It's an aggressive article...)
- [DHome](#) (Good video. In the second picture, look at the mason bee poop on the back finger ... funny trait if you've had mason bees emerge on your hand before.))

In our next issue...

- What you're seeing with the bees
- Progress with the campaign 😎

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

Dave Hunter, Owner