



November 2015 Bee-Mail



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In this issue:

- [Check on hibernating bees](#)
- [Free Documentary Series about Sustainability!](#)
- [Cornell University needs & Bee BuyBack program](#)
- [Help us spread the news about mason bees](#)
- [Research and Development \(New products in the works!\)](#)
- [Cornell's Insectapalooza feedback](#)
- [Meet Debbie, the voice behind the phone](#)

Check on hibernating bees

- ✓ Your mason bees are now stored someplace cool like in a HumidiBee in your refrigerator.
- ✓ They are surviving on their stored fats from their summer development. Lower temperatures has their metabolism slower, their stored fats are then consumed slower as well.
- ✓ Dehydration and mold should be your primary concerns right now.
- ✓ Add some water into your [HumidiBee](#) so things don't dry out. A tablespoon or so is fine.
- ✓ Check on your leafcutter cocoons as well.

Moldy cocoons?



Mold is an airborne spore that comes from a local source and lands on living things elsewhere, such as nearby cheese, moldy grapes, etc. Natural airflow in a refrigerator may transport mold to your hibernating cocoons.

What to do:

Simply wash your cocoons in a bath of 1 TBL bleach to 1 cup of cold water for minute or so. Rinse them in cold water and place them back into the HumidiBee. You may want to wash the lower pads in the same rinse.

If you have one of our older HumidiBees with larger holes on the top, close most of them up with tape. We think there is too much airflow occurring in them. Leave a few air gaps.

Sign up for a FREE sustainability documentary

I was in the right place at the right time earlier this summer as I met with Paul Wheaton of Permies.com. Nathan Crane, the producer of "[The Search for Sustainability](#)," was there to record Paul's thoughts on what it takes to be sustainable. He recorded my thoughts as well.

The *Search for Sustainability Documentary Series* starts this coming Sunday, November 1st, and I invite all of you to register to watch this empowering 12-part documentary series about sustaining life and thriving on the planet as a global collective.

You will be able to watch the entire series for free, or after they premier, be able to purchase the DVD's.

"...49 sustainability experts, permaculture designers, organic farmers, herbal medics, energy and building enthusiasts, systems analysts, green-politicians, and health educators share potentially world-changing information during this series that simply is not available all in one place anywhere online."

"The Search For Sustainability"
A documentary Series



I haven't seen the series yet. When it airs, I'll be watching it with you.

I did, however, watch a short video on the website and reflected on how it might be perceived by you, the Bee-Mail reader.

For me, I'm here to learn what I can do to better our planet. I accept all people as they are, what they think, how they dress, and most importantly, how they *do* things. I might not agree or understand everything I see and hear, but that is just part of the learning process. I try to contemplate what I see, research a bit more and come up with an understanding that works for me. I know I will learn many things along the way.

If you have time, join me in watching [this free series online!](#)

Looking for more mason bees

Crown Bees works with as many bee labs as possible to help advance the knowledge of the mason bee.

We've recently teamed with the [Danforth Lab](#) of Cornell University. Dr. Bryan Danforth's team has conducted some great research on native bees of North America.



They will be conducting an experiment to see if the Japanese hornfaced mason bee's chalkbrood has infected the native blue orchard bee. They're looking for a sampling of mason bees from mostly the Northeast United States, where the hornfaced bee was predominantly released back in the 1980's.

If you live in the Northeast United States, and have a few extra cocoons that you believe are blue orchard bees, can you send them to us in the next few weeks?

Exchange them for free products or cash!

Bee BuyBack update:

The Bee BuyBack program is the "end game" of Crown Bees. We teach you how to be successful raising mason bees, and ask that you send us your excess mason bee cocoons in exchange for free products including cash.

To date, we've received about 50,000 cocoons predominantly from the NW. News of "mason bees" is spreading across the country. I believe we may have a tough time supporting all of the requests for bees this spring.

If you have a few extra cocoons, please consider sending them to us now. It's fairly simple. Either harvest your cocoons yourself or send us your nesting holes and we'll harvest them for you.

Mailing them in a small box through the US Post Office is absolutely safe and easy to do! We ask that you fill out the form on our [Bee BuyBack page](#).

Help spread awareness of mason bees

We believe that few gardeners are aware there are bees other than the honey and bumble bee in their backyards.



All bees are aggressive and sting, and all bees provide honey... Hopefully by now you're well versed that these are both false rumors.



We'd like your help informing your friends and family there are gentle bees that can be raised that will help their yard and later help their food supply.

In 8 years, this is our first Bee-Mail with an attachment. Could you, in your social media (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram), please attach this picture sometime soon? As we design other great messages, we'll share them with you periodically.

Help us reach others with this simple message:

**PLEASE SHARE ON FACEBOOK or INSTAGRAM!
Help us spread the #BeeLove!**



Research and Development!

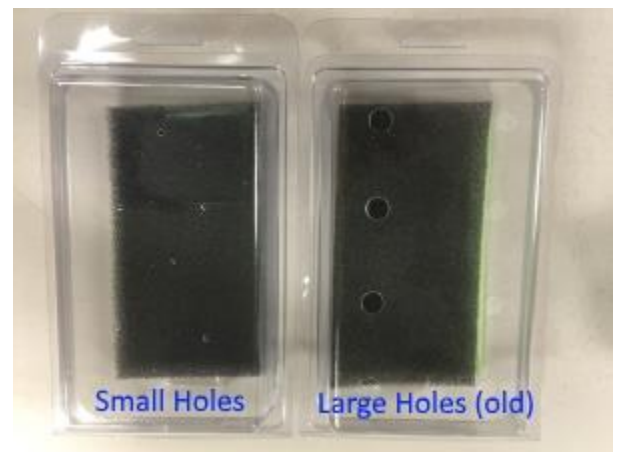
One of Crown Bees mission statements talks about "continually enhancing our products for our customer's best success."

Some items need subtle changes...

The **HumidiBee** change mentioned above, to have smaller holes, came about after we listened to people with bees crawling out in the spring and too much mold occurring. So, smaller holes was a simple fix.

Some items we're being picky to finalize...

The **Bat House**, that we spoke about In August, is simple but challenging in other aspects. We have had several local carpenters provide prototypes of our designs, but we find them either too costly or poorly made. We're very close to



obtaining great cedar at a good price with craftsman that we believe provides superior products. We will then have it available on our website. Quality products made in the US are important to us.

Other items we're creating from scratch...

One product that I'm absolutely anxious to get to you is our **Mud Box**. Gordon, our Canadian teammate, experimented with our green absorbent cloth this summer and found that it had great "capillary" action carrying water from the chamber below to mud above.



We worked out a quick design and then tested it ourselves last week. In the photo to the right, you see our dried mud that had been rolled into a log and then baked until absolutely dry.

We placed the dried mud on top of the damp cloth and within 2 hours, the entire clay was either wet at the bottom or slightly damp on the top. This says that a visiting mason bee will be able to find the right moisture content in her mud gathering.

We also placed the mud under a heat lamp for three days with the rain shield cover off to see what happened to the mud. Nothing... it stayed the same throughout all three days. WONDERFUL!

And some items are replacements...

We're experimenting with a **stone raindrop** that will replace our pine wood raindrop. Wood tends to crack where the fibers are weakest, and the bottom of our wood raindrop has had reports of some cracks after a few year. Such a beautiful piece and shape!!! Same shape, but different material is where we headed. Copper is too expensive, and plastic wasn't right. Bamboo tends to mold and isn't waterproof.

Fired clay turns to stone... and is extremely durable. Fortunately a prototype came to us broken. We learned an early lesson about shipping stoneware!



(Not to be repeated when we carry this in 2016.)

Cornell's Insectapalooza & Community

Last month we teamed with New York's Cornell University at their "Insectapalooza" that had 300+ kids and parents roam various floors learning about insects.

We gave away a few thousand EasyTears with instructions and borrowed a wonderful Cornell teammate, Mary Centralia (in the right photo), from the Danforth lab to teach the visitors about mason bees. (Thanks Mary!)

We hope to encourage many new mason bee families to help us raise bees for their backyards and orchards!



Connect with others in an online community...

There is a great community underway that discusses bees, sustainability, and similar issues in Facebook. You might want to [check this page](#) out.

Meet Debbie, the voice behind the phone



Debbie is the glue to Crown Bees. In a small company, each teammate wears many hats.

As our office manager, she handles customer service, accounting, order processing for both gardeners and nurseries, and everything "administrative" to keep things running well.

Debbie likes her ducks all in a row, tallest to shortest, with all webbed feet in unison. I truly need someone like her to balance my "less grounded" self.

She also loves to teach and to help others be successful. *That's a great thing when answering a phone or responding to email questions.*

I'm blessed to have such a wonderful teammate working alongside me!