



Learning to Do What's Natural



September 2017 | crownbees.com

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TIPS & REMINDERS - *Summer Leafcutter Bees*



The weather is starting to cool and with the end of summer comes the end of the leafcutter bee season. It's a bittersweet time and we are thankful for the bees' hard work pollinating our summer gardens.

Winter storage of leafcutter bee nesting holes. Keep an eye out for dwindling leafcutter bee activity at their bee house. When daytime temperatures drop below 60°F (15°C), you should see fewer bees flying. It's time to protect leafcutter bee nesting material as soon as you no longer see female bees working. To protect leafcutter bee cocoons against ants, birds, and mice, place filled materials with holes facing up into the fine mesh BeeGuard bag and store in an unheated garage or shed.

- For more protection, try hanging the BeeGuard bag or placing everything into a mice-proof and breathable container.

Send us your pictures! Did leafcutter bees give you a bumper crop of tomatoes, peppers, beans, and squash? We'd love to share your photos and testimonial with other gardeners. Our goal is to help more people grow more food! Email us: outreach@crowbees.com

TIPS & REMINDERS - *Spring Mason Bees*



If you are new to raising mason bees, read our [BeeMail](#) archives to follow our previous tips and reminders.

Why do we harvest mason bee cocoons? All creatures have diseases and pests and mason bees are no different. When you harvest cocoons, you save next spring's adult mason bees from walking through a mass of pollen mites or chalkbrood. Clean bees are happy & healthy bees!

Gardeners have asked "Why bother?" as it's natural to have pests. Because we aggregate a lot of bees in one location, it is easier for pests to move from one hole to another. This increases the amount of pests, which accelerates the loss of your bees.

Pre-harvest protective storage. By now, you stored the filled nesting materials in a location that has similar warm temperatures to the outdoor weather, like an unheated garage or garden shed.

Do not put mason bee nesting holes into the fridge yet! Remember that we are mimicking nature's conditions. It's not cold outside yet and the mason bee larvae and pupae depend on the warm summer weather to develop and grow into adult bees. You only place cleaned and harvested mason bee cocoons into the fridge in the fall.

Plan ahead for harvesting cocoons. Mason bees are still developing inside of their cocoons and are not quite ready for harvest. **October** is the time to start harvesting cocoons and we will have more instructions and tips then.

HOST YOUR OWN HARVEST PARTY

Hosting a mason bee cocoon harvest party is a great way to educate your friends and family about raising mason bees. You share the fun of harvesting cocoons and you might gift extra cocoons to participants. A future benefit of sharing cocoons: you will have a local source to turn to if you ever have a bad season.

All you need to do is pick a date (after the beginning of October), invite your friends, cover your table with newspaper, open nesting holes, and give the cocoons a quick bath. We suggest that you serve some refreshments as a way to thank your guests for helping you.

Our online videos (discussed next month) are found on our [video page](#).

2017 MASON BEE COCOON HARVEST PARTY



New to raising mason bees and live near us in Woodinville, WA? Learn how to harvest mason bee cocoons!

Bring your bee house's filled nesting materials and learn how to open lake reeds, cardboard tubes, and wooden nesting trays. Identify pests, and keep healthy bee cocoons. You will also wash cocoons in a mild bleach bath. Come dressed to get a little dirty.

You can trade your clean mason bee cocoons for fresh nesting materials or a gift certificate.

All of our products will be available for sale and we will be offering our Bee BuyBack program.

Haven't raised mason bees yet? No problem! You can join in and help others open their nesting holes. Children are welcome but must be supervised at all times. Snacks and hot drinks provided.

RSVP online via the Facebook [event](#)! Share the event and bring your friends.

We are also looking for local volunteers to help during the harvest party. Please sign up using the [Sign-Up Genius](#) online tool.

SAVE THE DATE: PORTLAND HARVEST PARTY

The Portland Community College Southeast Learning Garden is hosting a harvest party on October 28 from 12-5 pm.

Dave Hunter, from Crown Bees, will be attending and teaching gardeners how to harvest mason bee cocoons along with volunteers and staff from Portland Nursery and PCC. We will share more details in next month's BeeMail. For now you can connect to the Learning Garden on their [Facebook page](#).

If you live in the Portland OR area, please join in on the fun!

BEE PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

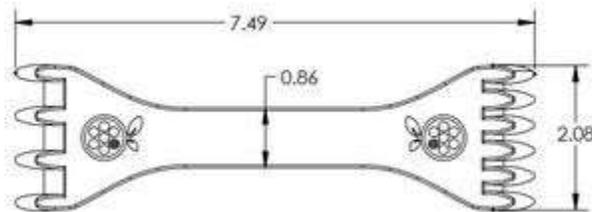
BeeGuard Bag - Over the summer, protect developing mason bee larvae from harmful parasitic wasps, ants, and carpet beetles with this fine mesh bag. After you harvest mason bee cocoons in the fall, reuse the bag to protect leafcutter bees over the winter. Large enough to hold 2 large nesting trays or 400 loose nesting tubes! Also a great bag for incubating leafcutter cocoons next spring!



HumidiBee - Store your clean and harvested mason bee cocoons in this specialized container. Storing cocoons over the winter in the fridge, at a consistent temperature, helps ensure your mason bee survive. But today's frost-free fridges are too dry for cocoons. The HumidiBee is an easy way to keep your cocoons moist but not wet. Simply add a tablespoon of water every month (we'll remind you inBeeMail during the winter!).



And almost ready for harvest, our Harvest Comb, which easily removes cocoons from our mason and leafcutter wood trays. We will have this available October.



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