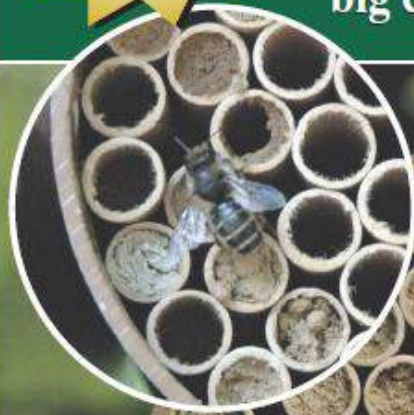


# MASON BEE NEST KITS

Attract these friendly American bees to your garden—and grow a big colony in just a few seasons.



60-tube Mason Bee House in June. Mud sealed tubes hold 300 plus Masons for next Spring.

INSET ABOVE: A busy Mason Bee working on her nest tubes.

Each female Mason can lay six or seven eggs per 6" nesting tube. So from just a few in a Starter House, you can build up a population of several thousand friendly pollinators in as little as three years.

## Effective Pollinators

Unlike honeybees, Masons are more interested in pollen than nectar—and their hairy bodies are the perfect pollinating instrument. It only takes 250-750 Orchard Mason bees to pollinate an acre of apples. It would take 60,000-120,000 honeybees to do the same job.

## MASONS POLLINATE:

- Fruit trees
- Blueberries
- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Many other Spring flowering fruits and ornamentals



# Take the Sting out of Bee Keeping— and increase your fruit harvest.

## Masons vs. Honeybees

Our native Mason bees have lived in America for millions of years. We call them Masons because they work with mud to build and seal their nests. Honeybees were introduced by Europeans just 400 years ago—and we all love their honey. But lately, honeybee numbers are much reduced through parasitic mites and mystery diseases that are wiping out their hives.



These ailments largely haven't affected our native American bees. They do a grand job pollinating orchards and gardens, especially since they are active in colder temperatures and their hairy bodies carry more of the pollen that fertilizes your blossoms. Though they won't give you honey, they won't ever chase or sting you either—unless severely provoked. They're fun to watch as well.

▼ *Our very own Apiary for Orchard Mason Bees.*





## Attracting Mason Bees

In the wild, Masons build their mud sealed nests in natural tubes like reeds or holes in dead trees. Sometimes they'll make homes between wood shingles on houses and barns. (They do no damage—they just build their mud homes in sheltered cracks.)

Now extensive research by the US Department of Agriculture has proved that the Mason bees' task is made much easier if we provide 6" paper-lined tubes  $\frac{5}{8}$ " in diameter, that are somewhat weatherproof and contained in a protective shelter. The smooth tubes we humans can supply mean the female Mason has a lot less prep work to do on her nest—and she can channel that extra time and energy into laying more eggs.

Position Nest Kits firm and level in a sheltered sunny spot, facing East or South, where it won't be disturbed. 6 to 8 ft. high is a good height.

## Other Native Bees

Besides the Orchard Mason Bee (*Osmia lignaria*) you may attract a couple of leaf cutter bees as well, depending on where you live. *Osmia montana* uses chewed leaves as a building material—so it looks green. *Osmia californica* uses a blend of leaves and dirt. They're helpful pollinators too.

## The Mason Bee life cycle

Those mud sealed tubes contain the whole future population of Masons, males and females. All of last year's adults have completed their lives by the end of the previous Spring. Each 6" tube contains 6 or 7 separate compartments, each with one egg and a food store pellet of pollen and nectar. In summer, the eggs hatch and the grubs feed. By September, they are



transformed into adult bees that stay in their snug mud home until blossom time the following Spring.

Cleverly, the Mason Bee mothers have laid female eggs in the 4 or 5 most protected inner compartments—and just a couple of male eggs near the outside. The males chew their way out first into the warm Spring sunshine and eagerly await the coming out of the female debutantes. Mating is over quickly and the females devote the rest of their short, busy lives to finding a nest site, locating mud, making one cell at a time, provisioning it, laying one egg, sealing with mud—and on to the next one.

Because they are so docile, you can stand close to the tube and see the females going in frontwards with either mud or food pellets—then backwards in order to lay their eggs. Sometimes, they'll just sit on the front porch of their tube and visit in neighborly fashion. Though each female is in complete charge of her own house and nesting arrangements, they're quite gregarious and seem to like living in groups.

# Mason Bee Nest Kits

Kinsman Company offers  
three new Nest Kits and Bulk Nesting Tubes:



Each is housed in a sturdy 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long PVC housing.  
The Kraft paper nest tubes have acetate wrap for strength and moisture protection and are  $\frac{5}{16}$ " in diameter x 6" long. Each kit is wrapped in an explanatory color leaflet.

## Changing your Nesting Tubes

Try to provide fresh nesting tubes for your Mason Bees by replacing tubes that have been used last year. This helps protect against a buildup of parasitic mites that can carry over in used tubes. (Google 'Krombein's Mite' to learn more). Unused tubes are still good, of course.

## REPLACEMENT NESTING TUBE

Each Kraft paper tube is 6" long x 5/16" dia.

**Bundle of 100 tubes**  
**Item #KCOBRT**

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For ordering Kinsman Bee Houses, please visit

**[www.kinsmangarden.com](http://www.kinsmangarden.com)**



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