Congratulations! *By purchasing this bee-box, you now have the privilege of offering precious habitat for mason bees that are native to your area. By hanging this bee-box in your backyard, you are sending out to the universe intentions of care and concern for these beautiful pollinators who are in peril, as are all pollinators.*

Mason Bees

Mason bees are extraordinary pollinators who are native to Colorado. You may know them as "orchard bees" because orchard growers love to have them pollinating their fruit. Mason bees are shy and do not sting even though they are capable of stinging. Due to pesticides and herbicides in our environment and disappearing habitat, mason bees, along with other pollinators, are disappearing. You can help by refraining from using harmful chemicals in your yard and by creating habitat for these charming little creatures.

Instructions on Hanging your Beebox:

An ideal site for the beebox is on the south-facing or east-facing side of your house under an overhang where they will get morning sun. It is best to mount the box 3-6 ft from the ground. The Box should be mounted before early spring. It is helpful to have mud available nearby in the spring when the bees are laying their eggs in the tubes. Female mason bees begin looking for a nesting site in early spring in time for the first blossoms. So, it is crucial that you hang your beebox before this season.

Bee boxes made of certain aromatic woods need to "winter" outside before they will be welcoming to the bees. Be patient, it may take one to two years before the bees will choose your box as their home. When the mason bees respond to your invitation of housing, you will be delighted to have them as your neighbors.

***After the bees have left the hive, there is an opening of **only a few days** before the hatched bees will return to lay eggs in the beebox. This is the time to clean out the openings with soapy water made with a mild dish-soap and a pipe cleaner. Cleaning your beebox is helpful to the bees to eliminate pollen mites which collect in the box and compete for food.

Information about Mason Bees

The female will mate and look for a suitable nesting site such as a hole in a tree left by a woodpecker. An Ideal nest size is 5/16" in diameter and 4" to 6" in length. Once she finds a suitable nest site she will gather mud and begin making a cell in the deepest part of the hole. She will then gather pollen and nectar from the spring flowers such as apple blossoms. An egg will be laid on top of the pollen and nectar and then she will seal that space off with a mud wall and then repeat this process over and over until she has filled the hole with 6-10 cells. After completing this important task, she will die. The eggs will exist for 1-3 weeks before hatching. Larvae will then hatch and feed for up to 10 days on the pollen and nectar left for them by their mother. This larva will change into a pupa and remain in hibernation through the winter. In the spring, when the weather warms up, the males will begin to emerge by chewing their way out of the cocoons and through the mud plugs. The females, which are almost always in the inner cells of the tunnel, emerge several days later. Within a few days, they will begin to gather pollen and begin the whole process all over again.

Besides orchard bees, you may have other solitary bees take up residence in your elegant bee condo. You might discover leafcutter bees setting up household in your beebox. They are also important pollinators native to Colorado. Not to worry, they are not aggressive and only sting when handled.

Mason Bee