

Welcome to

Mason Bee Basics

More buzzzz for your backyard and orchard

By the "Bee Lady"
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Our Mission

(should you choose to accept it)

- Knowledge
 - Know what mason bees are
 - Know how to raise/handle them
 - Be ahead of the questions
- Spread the word
- Spread the bees
 - Fostering
 - Owning
 - Passing extras forward to be fostered



What are Mason Bees?



- Native to US
- 130 types in NW
- Non aggressive
- Solitary
- Super pollinator
- AKA BOB, OMB

Physical Characteristics

- About the size of a honey bee
- Stocky in shape
- Female larger than male
- Fuzzy
- Male differences
 - No stinger
 - White on face
 - Longer antennae
 - Gathers no pollen
- Blue/black in color



Japanese Hornfaced Bee

- Brought here in 1984
- Naturalized
- Slightly smaller than BOB
- Same characteristics
- Can Inhabit the same nest



Fun Facts

- Female or male egg
- 75 flowers per trip
- 15 to 35 trips for one larva
- 30 eggs
- 10 trips per 1 mud wall
- 250 to 750 orchard mason bees vs 2 full hives (60,000 to 120,000) honeybees for 1 acre apples.

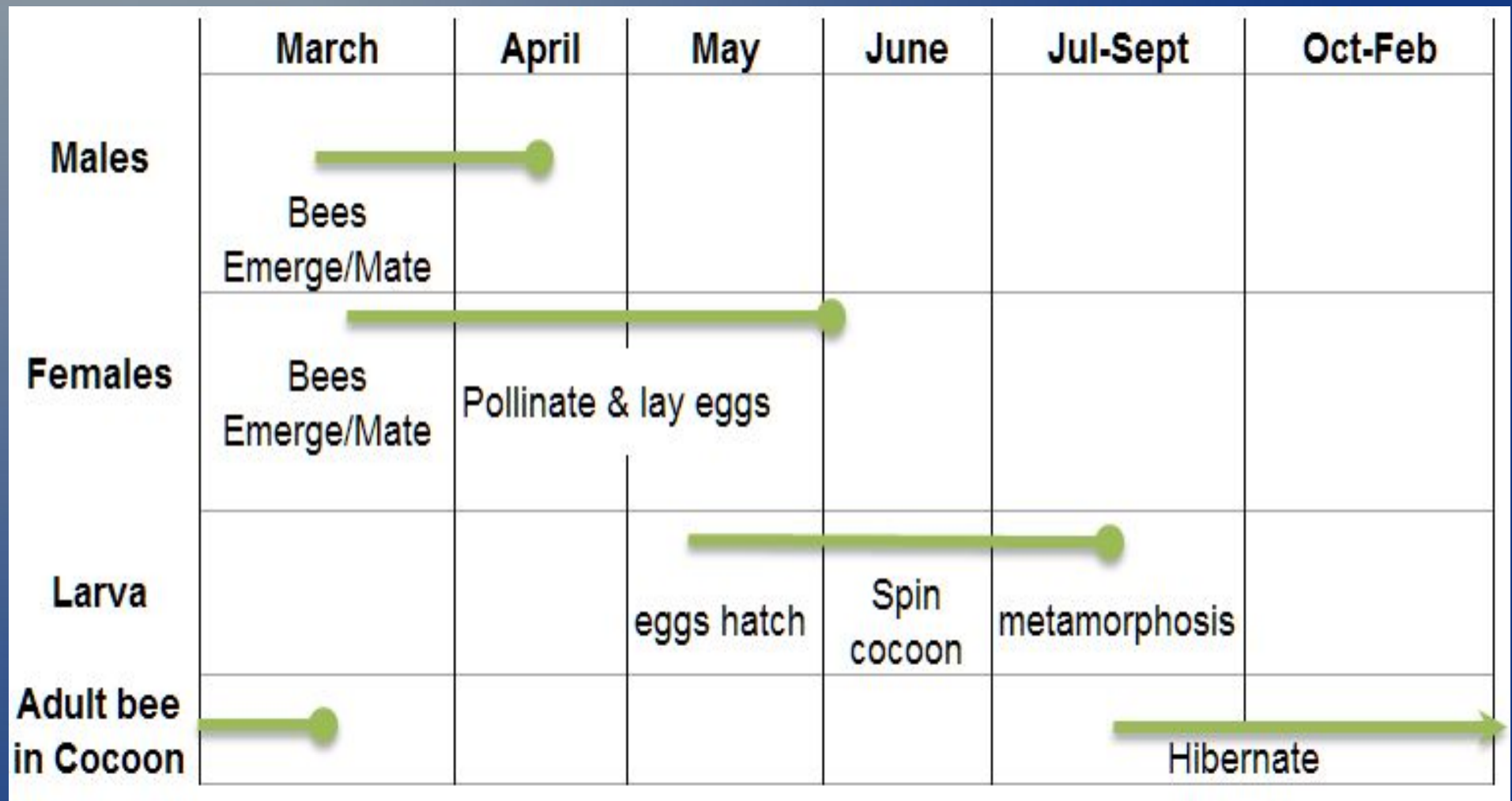


Pollination Advantage

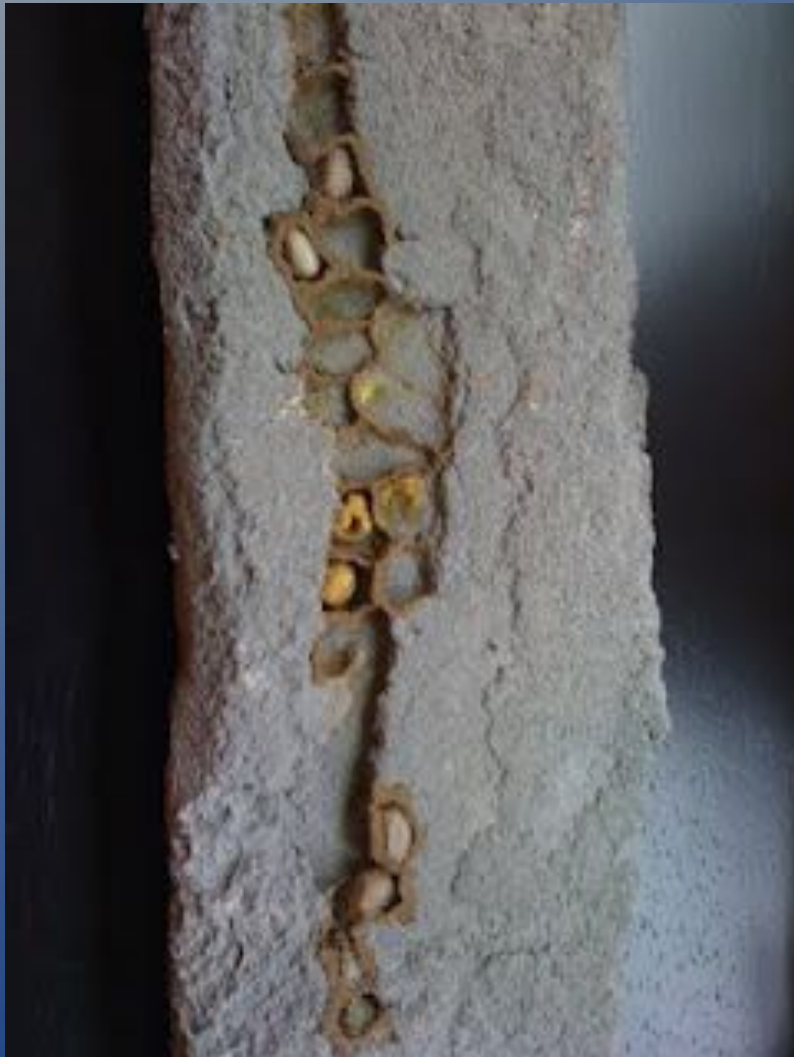
- Works in cool weather
 - Earlier in the year
 - Earlier in the day
- Pollen collected on body
- Belly flops on flowers
- Collect pollen and nectar at the same time
- Males also pollinate
- 97% effective – plant to plant, tree to tree
- Prefers fruit trees



Life Cycle



Nesting - In the Wild



- Holes in logs, trees, house siding
- They don't create, just occupy
- They choose mixed variety of vegetation

Nesting - Your Space

- Creating for Your Space
 - South, southeast, east facing
 - Protected from wind and rain
 - Elevate 3-5 feet
 - Forage and mud close
 - Plan for predators and parasites



Essentials for a Mason Bee

Food

- Big leaf maple - “meat and potatoes”
- Pollen and nectar within 300’ (100m) of their nest.
- Prefer composite flowers and open petals. Think “dandelion” and “fruit tree blossom.”



What's in bloom in March

- Vine maple
- Big-leaf maple
- Oregon grape
- Hazelnut
- Indian plum/plum
- Windflower
- Balsamroot
- Crocus
- Hyacinth
- Alder (pollen)
- Willow



- Andromeda (Pieris japonica)
- Pussy willow
- Forsythia
- Daphne
- Currant
- Heath
- Currant
- Salmon berry
- Elderberry
- Miner's lettuce
- Witch hazel (pollen)

Nest Building

Mud

- A source within 20-30 feet of shelter
- Should be more clayey than silty
- Create a mud hole
 - Dig 6-12 inches
 - Mound dirt beside hole
- Other examples online
- Need clay? Try cheap cat litter.



Housing Preferences



- Non Toxic Material
 - No redwood, cedar or treated wood
- Holes deep enough – 4-6”
- Holes correct size – 5/16”
- No gapes for light
- Straws a good option

More Housing Options



- Tubes and straws inside a protected structure
- Wood trays
- Natural reeds
 - Teasel
 - Sunflower stems
 - Reeds

Predators, Parasites and Diseases



- Predators

- Birds
- Squirrels
- Racoons

- Parasites

- Parasitic wasps
- Mites
- Beetles

Diseases

- Chalkbrood

Good Places for More Info

snohomish.wsu.edu

fernandrosemary.com

xerces.org

gardening.wsu.edu (search-bee)

crownbees.com

sare.org/Learning-Center/Books

Google – Mason bee tubes diy



Questions?

