



BECOME A MASON BEE KEEPER

In March, our native solitary (no hives!) Mason Bees are just emerging from their winter cocoons and becoming active in our gardens. Their emergence is timed with the flowering of our fruit trees. Ornamental cherries will keep them busy at first, and then they will move on to pollinating our apple, pear, sweet cherry trees and more. Are you hoping for an abundant crop this year? Maybe you'd like to see more blueberries on your bushes! The best and most natural way to boost production is to invite Mason Bees to set up housekeeping in your yard. Did you know that a single Mason Bee can pollinate as effectively as 100 honey bees? Wow!

Mason Bees are gentle and non-aggressive because they aren't defending a hive. They lay their eggs in holes in trees and open hollow stems of grasses and plants. Or, you can supply them with a cozy nesting spot in your yard. Mason Bee nest boxes are a fun and easy way to hang out a big "Welcome" sign and assure that when those bees emerge and get down to work next season, they will do so right in your own garden. And it's fun to watch them come and go from the nest box as they lay their eggs during March and April.

The Nature Store sells nesting hollows: natural plant stems, lined tubes or reusable wood blocks. We also sell optional cedar nest boxes to hold your tubes starting at \$25 or boxes that are filled with tubes and ready to go for \$50. We also have starter kits with tubes nestled in a protective PVC shell for \$27.95. Most everyone has a few Mason Bees that visit their gardens, but if you haven't seen them, then you can add an attractant to your nest box for \$5.95. Need more information? Pick up a guide book for \$4.95 or chat with our store staff. And members can expect a 10% discount off the above prices! Mason Bees are active and laying eggs throughout the months of March and April, so get started right now as a Mason Bee Keeper!

