

# Blue Orchard Mason Bee Calendar

Female



male



**For the Willamette Valley- check with your extension office for dates in your area.**

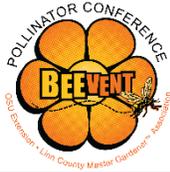


<b>January- June</b>	Provide water, MUD and early flowering plants. Mason Bees prefer blooming native shrubs, trees, and flowers.
<b>Mid to late Feb</b>	Depending on the weather, Mason bees nesting houses, blocks and tubes can be put out in mid or late February, but <b>not the cocoons yet</b> . Local Mason bees might be looking for “holes” to place their eggs.
<b>Late March -April</b>	Using an emergence container try to do 3 cocoon releases. Put out a minimum of 20-25 cocoons in each release. (2 releases if you don't have enough cocoons). Do not fill the emergence tube more than half full. <u>When to put out cocoons: first look for blooms on plants/trees.</u> The bees need continuous sources of pollen & nectar. No food = no cocoons. Cocoons will emerge more quickly if temps are over 50-55° for several days in a row. With climate change, these factors may not happen until April. If your cocoons are in your refrigerator, where they should be, they will be okay there while you wait. Be patient. Sign up for Bee Notes at <a href="http://www.LinnMasterGardeners.com">www.LinnMasterGardeners.com</a> to get recommendations and more info.
<b>June 1<sup>st</sup></b> Check Bee Notes	This takedown date could change with weather changes. We will use Bee Notes to tell you when to do your takedown. Place the capped end of tubes and blocks upright in a paper bag. Fold over the top and staple shut. The upright position might help keep a larva on top of the pollen ball. The bag helps protect the cocoons from a parasitoid wasp as well as other pests. Place in a warm, but not hot location in a garage or shed (not top shelf or a closet). Cocoons need summer warmth for the bees to finish developing.
<b>October</b>	Harvest cocoons from blocks and tubes. Clean cocoons. The survival rates and health of the bees significantly increase by following best practices. Store in your refrigerator until next Spring. More information about cocoon harvesting on our website. <b>Registration opens in mid-September for October Cocoon Harvesting Workshops.</b> Class size is limited. <b>Register and find locations/times at <a href="http://www.LinnMasterGardeners.com">www.LinnMasterGardeners.com</a></b> or call Linn Extension 541-967-3871
November- December- January	If you forgot to harvest and clean your cocoons. It is not to late- Do it <u>now</u> to help the bees conserve their energy.
<b>October -March</b>	Store cocoons in your veggie bin in your refrigerator. Cocoons should be in a large container along with wet paper towel placed in smaller container that is placed in the larger container to help maintain humidity in the container. Make a few small holes in top. Maintaining a cool constant temperature helps the bees conserve energy until you release them.

To learn more about Mason Bees (and other pollinators) SIGN UP FOR BEE NOTES.

*These are periodic e-mails with reminders and information to help pollinators.*

Look for gardening & pollinator classes at [www.LinnMasterGardeners.com](http://www.LinnMasterGardeners.com)



Beevent Pollinator Conference is held the first Saturday in March at the Linn County Expo Center. This one-day conference features national, state and local experts.

## Mason Bee House Placement:

- Optimum height of bee house from ground is about 3-6 feet. Yes, it can be higher.
- It should be high enough to be above the splash zone, but don't install it too high- you and your kids will want to watch the bees in action!
- The bee house should be placed where it receives morning sun, such as the South-East wall of your home. If you don't have great morning sun, give them as much as you can, bees survive in the wild without this. Your bees just do better with it!
- You also need to think where the afternoon sun is as you do not want the nesting box to be in direct sun in the afternoon. It will get too hot for the bees and may kill them.
- The opening of the bee house should face away from prevailing winds and rain as much as possible. This helps keep the holes and liners dry (less mold issues).
- A covered porch can offer some rain and wind protection.
- Don't place the bee house over a pond or water source. Your bees haven't taken swimming lessons, and many could drown.
- Place the bee house away from your bird feeder, bees make tasty morsels. A wire mesh with 3/4"-1" openings placed about 4" from the "holes" allow the bees to fly freely through, and can help keeps birds out.
- Have a water/mud that has lots of clay nearby. Mason bees need mud to enclose their cocoons.



female- lives 6-8 weeks



male (white whiskers on face) lives 2 weeks to mate.

*Native pollinators	*Prefer native plants	<b>* More effective pollinators than honey bees for many fruit trees.</b>
*They very rarely sting	*Do not make honey	<b>*1 BOB can pollinate as much as 75-120 honey bees for some plants. They can increase yield &amp; crop quality.</b>
*No worker bees	*They are solitary	*Females build and tend their own nest.
*They don't travel long distances from their nest. 100 yard range from their nesting site.		* Active mid-March- June
*They need early blooming plants, trees and shrubs (mid Feb-June), water, MUD! <b>Blue Orchard Mason Bees are sometimes called BOB.</b>		
Female Mason Bee cocoons are laid in the holes first and then the male cocoons. Female Mason Bee cocoons are usually 3" or deeper in the holes		
Plants that bloom every season help all pollinators. Hybrids may not produce much nectar or pollen. Double flowering plants don't allow easy access to nectar or pollen. Native plants, trees and shrubs are a great choice! Bees like white, yellow, purple, blue flowers.		

2-14-24