



MASON BEE CALENDAR

What is involved with caring for mason bees.? It comes down to four basic steps; harvest cocoons, winter storage, release and summer storage. Follow these guidelines to be successful managing mason bees. For more information:

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OCTOBER-JANUARY

Cocoon Harvest October-November:

Remove cocoons from blocks and tubes

Wash , rinse and allow to air dry

Wash in Basic Solution

2 ounces bleach per gallon of cold water

Add 1 drop – Dawn

Soak for 2 minutes

Rinse in cold water

Winter Storage:

Store cocoons in a container in the refrigerator.

The storage container must have air holes for ventilation and to prevent molding.

Since cocoons do need some humidity during storage, place a damp paper towel in a smaller open container. Put a damp paper towel in this smaller storage container and place inside the main container.

Frequently check that the paper towel is still damp. Also check for any mold on the cocoons. If mold is present, wash the cocoons in the basic solution mentioned above and allow cocoons to air dry. Continue to store in refrigerator until it is time to release the cocoons.

Winter Storage

Primary container has holes in lid
Secondary container has a damp paper towel



MARCH

Bee House Placement:

Mud and water close to house

Place house 3-6 ft off the ground

Place so house gets morning sun

Avoid afternoon sun on house

Protect from wind and rain

When to put cocoons out:

Watch the weather, temperature needs to be 55° for at least 4 days

No heavy rain in forecast

When some plants are in bloom; natives, apples or other fruit trees



How to release cocoons:

Place 20 -25 cocoons in Emergence Tube

Put tube in top portion of house

Check in approximately 5 days. Put more cocoons in tube when others have emerged

APRIL

Release all cocoons by the end of April

Check house at least once per week for bee activity and plugged holes

Typical recommendation' is to add more tubes when the other unit is a little more than half full.

Keep record of release date and when tubes start to fill.

MAY TO JUNE

Mason bees live for 6-8 weeks so watch for signs of diminished activity

When there is not activity, take the wooden block or tubes out of house

Place upright in paper bag, staple shut

Store in area that is warm but not over 90° in summer