

## **Horned-Faced Mason Bee**

*Osmia cornifrons* Radoskowski, or the horned-faced bee, is a native of Japan, where it is extensively used for fruit (apple and cherry) pollination in the land of the rising sun.

They were originally introduced to North America on the east coast in the 1960's by Dr. Suzanne Batra, with the USDA Bee Research Laboratory, Agriculture Research Service, at Beltsville, Maryland. Despite difficulty surviving severe winters, the horn-faced mason bee is now established in the east and Midwest; and, more recently, in the Pacific Northwest, around the suburban areas of south Puget Sound and Portland, OR.

Horned-faced mason bees are much smaller than orchard mason bees. They are about two-third's smaller in size. Thus, they can set up cells in smaller nesting holes. However, they will readily adopt 5/16<sup>th</sup> inch orchard mason bee nesting holes. Being solitary bees, both horned-faced and orchard mason bees will co-exist together.

They derive their name from a distinctive horn on their face. These small bees are brownish colored with light, orange stripes on the abdomen. This gentle pollinator seldom stings. Its sting is similar to a mosquito bite.

Set out trap nests in known established habitats of horned-faced mason bees if you desire to establish them in your fruit orchard. Check with your local master gardeners, or county cooperative extension service, to locate established horned-faced bee habits.

Pollinator Paradise ([www.pollinatorparadise.com](http://www.pollinatorparadise.com)) offers a limited supply of horned-faced mason bee cocoons to east coast customers only.

Dr. Karen Strickler, PhD, offers further information on Horned-Faced Mason Bees on her Pollinator Paradise web page, under “About Blue Orchard Bees, Osmia lignaria, and Hornfaced Bees, Osmia cornifrons;” “Recognizing adult hornfaced bee vs. orchard blue bees;” “Recognizing hornfaced bee vs. blue orchard bee cocoons;” and, Managing Osmia bees for orchard pollination.”

Dr. Suzanne W.T. Batra, provides comprehensive information on hornfaced mason bees. Click on “Dr. Batra’s guide to the management of hornfaced mason bees” at Pollinator Paradise ([http://www.pollinatorparadise.com/Solitary\\_Bees/Hornface.htm](http://www.pollinatorparadise.com/Solitary_Bees/Hornface.htm)).

General guidelines for orchard mason bees apply to horn-faced mason bees, with a few exceptions. This information is available in Brian L. Griffin’s book “The Orchard Mason Bee;” Dr. Margriet Dogterom’s “Pollination with Mason Bees;” and, “How to Manage the Blue Orchard Bee” by Jordi Bosch and William Kemp.