

Mason Bee Food Sources

Native bees, such as the mason bee, fly a short distance from their nests to the foraging area. Honey bees fly greater distances; sometimes, up to a few miles away. Establish mason bee nesting units near their food source, as they have a limited feeding range of 100-yards.

Mason bees are hard working pollinators, yet seek pollen and nectar from the nearest source. They are valued for pollinating almond and fruit trees. Fruits trees pollinated by mason bees include apples, plums, prunes, nectarine, peach, pear, apricot, and cherry.

Other trees that mason bees prefer are holly, willow, sumac, western redbud, dogwood, and red maple.

Up to 1,000 mason bee nesting units are recommended per acre. Strategically place them in shelters around the orchard, bushes, or berry field. Mason bees are beneficial at pollinating blueberries, currants, raspberries, strawberries, and goose berries.

Provide a variety of blooms throughout the short life span of mason bees, especially during the busy month of May. Female mason bees live only six to eight weeks. Single bloom annuals, perennials and native wildflowers are a welcome addition to the mason bee habitat.

Remember, mason bees are attracted to purple, blue and yellow blossoms. Azaleas, begonias, camellias, larkspur, coneflower, buttercup, camas, rhododendrums, sweet pea, echinace, and calendula are mason bee favorites. They also like dandelions, honeysuckle, canola, milkweed and flowering kale.

Bulletins available thru your state agriculture extension service, and online at Pollinator Paradise (www.pollinatorparadise.com) list more plants that mason bees visit for pollen and nectar.

A diverse habitat benefits mason bees and other native pollinators, while creating a fertile and productive landscape.