

Mason Bee Fun Facts

Mason bees are exceptionally hard working super pollinators. Six mason bees will pollinate one fruit tree, compared to 10,000 honeybees. Mason bees and honeybees are compatible pollinators.

Mason bees are early spring pollinators that emerge when temperatures are 55 degrees (Fahrenheit), or warmer, over three or four consecutive days.

Mason bees are valuable pollinators of fruit and nut trees, some berries, and a few early spring flowers. A single mason bee will visit between 1,600 to 2,400 blossoms daily, and pollinate over 90% of them. A female visits an average of 75 flowers per foraging trip.

Females determine whether to lay male or female eggs. A female lays three or four male eggs for every two females. Males emerge first, followed by females a couple days later. Females mate on the day of emergence, and males die a few days after.

Fifteen to 35 trips are needed to collect sufficient nectar and pollen to feed each larva. Each female lays an average of an egg per day, or 34 to 36 eggs during her short life span.

Each nesting tube has five or six eggs. A mud wall separates each egg and it's food supply. Ten trips are usually needed to construct each mud wall.

Mason bees are not destructive insects. They only use holes found in nature or provided by man.

Many times mason bees are called "mud bees" because they partition and seal their nesting chambers with mud. Sometimes they are called "twig bees" for adopting hollow twigs as their nesting chamber.

Mason bees forage in a limited radius of 100 yards, or the length of a football field.

Mason bees are often confused with house flies, as they look like a blue housefly. Listen and you'll be able to determine which is a fly or a bee. House flies make a humming sound, while mason bees make a buzzing sound.

Mason bees are solitary, gentle, non-aggressive pollinators. Only the female stings when she faces serious danger. Her sting is similar to a mosquito bite. Folks of all ages are safe around these super pollinators.

Mason bees are an excellent biology project for students, as well as an ongoing community project for master gardeners, garden clubs, and youth groups, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H, and Future Farmers of America.

Mason bees provide hours of enjoyment observing their nesting habits and valuable pollination efforts.