

## **Mason Bee Life Cycle**

The pregnant female finds a nesting hole, marks it with her pheromone (scent), and begins building nesting cells with mud plugs, pollen and nectar. The egg is deposited via the female's ovipositor (stinger) into a pollen/nectar ball, then seals off the chamber with a mud plug. Female eggs (fertilized) are laid in the back third and male eggs (unfertilized) in the front two-thirds of the nesting hole. The female continues this regeneration process for thirty or more days, concluding her work in early June. She will lay up to 35 eggs during her brief life cycle.

Eggs begin hatching in June. Larvae will eat the pollen/nectar mix over the next 28-29 days. Larvae eliminate their waste in a corner of their nesting chamber, then rest several days.

Larvae spin a strong, pinkish colored, waterproof cocoon, followed by a month's rest.

Metamorphosis occurs over the remainder of summer. The larvae molts and becomes an adult pupa.

The adult bee hibernates throughout fall and winter between September and March, awakening and emerging to spring's warm temperatures.

The male emerges first, followed three to fifteen days later by the female, between early March and mid April, when outside temperatures are above 55-degrees Fahrenheit. Their emergence varies from year to year, depending on the weather.

Females mate within minutes of their emergence. Males die a few days after the last female is impregnated.

Pollination occurs between April and early June, when mason bees forage in a 100-yard range among swelling fruit tree buds and blossoms that provide sustenance to another generation of mason bees.