

Mason Bee Observation Units

An unique mason bee observation unit acquired several years ago was the **See-Bee House** available through Cougar Ridge Farm of Issaquah, WA, which is no longer available. It came with empty 6-inch glass tubes enclosed in a well designed cedar nesting shelter. As the mason bee goes about her spring work, you can easily see the tube fill with an egg laid in a pollen/nectar food mixture, and each compartment sealed with a mud cap. Later, you will see a weather-proof cocoon spun, where the adult bee hibernates over fall and winter.

Gardens Alive! (www.GardensAlive.com) offers a **Mason Bee Nest** that comes with 10 glass and two replacement nesting tubes to observe mason bees. This decorative 6-1/4" H x 8" W x 7" Deep durable cedar observation is unit is easy to hang, and comes with easy to read instructions.

Canadian company **Bee Diverse** (www.beediverse.com) of Vancouver, British Columbia, originally offered a 6-inch, three chamber, **wood observation nest**. Routed 5/16th-inch chambers have a clear plastic strip over them for easy observation of mason bee development. This unit has since been discontinued. Margriet Dogterom, PhD (author of "Pollination with Mason Bees"), of Bee Diverse, has improved upon the original observation nesting block. Bee Diverse now offers the **Peek-a-Boo Nest**, or **Mason Bee Observation Box**. It features a removable wood block with six observation chambers, covered with clear plastic. The observation block is enclosed in a beautifully crafted 4-1/2 x 7-1/2 x 2 1/4-inch wood chest, with an half-inch departure/entry hole centered on the right end. Instructions are included with the Peek-a-Boo Nest.

Pollinator Paradise (www.pollinatorparadise.com) of Parma, ID, is famous for Binderboard pollinating systems. A new product offered by Karen Strickler, PhD, of Pollinator Paradise, is the **7 Hole Cabin**. This upright observation nest opens on the left side to reveal seven chambers with pre-slit lintens. This allows folks of all ages to easily see development of mason bees inside the nest. Another observation nest is available for leafcutter bees. Perhaps it should be called the “Lucky” **13 Hole Cabin**. Thirteen leafcutter tunnels are available for the same price as the 7 Hole Cabin for mason bees. Leafcutter and mason bees can compatibly live next to each other, as they are solitary bees.

Whichever observation nest you choose, you will have fun sharing this interest with others, young and old alike, increase your knowledge, and appreciate the role of these super pollinators.