

Mason Bee Straws/Liners

1. Cut cooking parchment (i.e. Reynolds), wax or craft paper, into 8-1/2 x 11- inch sheets. Fold into fourths and cut into quarter sections.

Use an eight to 10-inch long, 1/4 or 5/16-inch diameter wood dowel (or #2 wood pencil) to roll the paper diagonally. Keep the paper snug as you roll from one corner to next (opposite corners). Or, use masking or clear (i.e. Scotch) tape to secure the straw. Tape over the middle section, and, if needed, near each end of the straw. Crimp one end of the straw by folding over the paper, or pinch one end with your fingers. Leave the opposite end open for entry by the mason bees. Cut off the small triangle section on the open end.

Another method is to cut 15-inch wide paper into thirds (6 1/4 by 5 inches). Roll length-wise side-to-side for a six-inch long straw. This is the ideal length for a mason bee nesting chamber; with female eggs in the back third, and male eggs in the front two-thirds of the liner/straw.

2. This will make liners that can be put into a nesting block or binder board. Loose straws may be used to fill a coffee can or man-made mason bee shelter.

3. Have an adequate supply of clean, new straws ready and in place before the first female emerges. Remember, mason bees reproduce five-fold each year. Remove and discard old straws as the last females emerge. Clean, new straws, protected in shelters from rain and wind, greatly improve chances for a successful mason bee nesting season.