

REMOVING MASON BEE COCOONS

We've designed our tubes to make removing the bees inside as simple and safe as possible. Mason bees can be extracted from the tubes once they have spun their cocoons (10-12 weeks after starting out as an egg), but we recommend waiting until October before opening tubes.

To remove mason bee cocoons, place only the inner layers of any mud-capped tubes in a large bowl of lukewarm water and leave them to soak for 1-2 hours. The glue holding the paper together will dissolve and the tubes should begin to unravel on their own. Return to finish unravelling the tubes by hand. Any healthy mason bee cocoons inside float free to the surface whilst mud, unused pollen and other detritus sinks to the bottom of the bowl. Discard all used tubes after extraction.

Use a sieve to remove the floating mason bee cocoons and rinse with clean water to remove any excess mud/detritus. Transfer clean cocoons to a paper towel and dry at room temperature for at least 3-4 hours. Once thoroughly dry, transfer your cocoons to a breathable container and store in a pest-free garage or garden shed over the winter months.

DO NOT keep cocoons in a fridge or inside your house at this time.

REMOVING OTHER COCOONS

Unlike the red mason bee, not all species overwinter as an adult in a waterproof cocoon, so using the above technique may not be suitable if you have found another species occupying your nesting tubes.

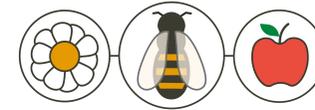
Fortunately, it's entirely possible to unravel our tubes *without* soaking them in water first – just find a split in the paper at one end of the tube and unpick it with your fingers. The layers of paper which make up the tubes can be peeled away one at a time until you reach the bees inside. Once extracted, store cocoons as above – in a breathable container, at ambient temperature, in an unheated garage or shed.

QUESTIONS/PROBLEMS?

Most product or solitary bee management queries can usually be answered using the comprehensive FAQ we've provided online – we recommend first visiting www.masonbees.co.uk/faq and if you can't find an answer there, send us an email: contact@masonbees.co.uk

Additional tubes and refills are available from our website.

To purchase, visit: www.masonbees.co.uk/shop



MASONBEES.CO.UK
FINDING SOLITARY BEES A HOME



NESTING TUBES & REFILLS

WELCOME!

Thank you for purchasing MasonBees Solitary Bee Nesting Tubes!

These tubes can be used inside a nesting tube holder or similar waterproof structure to provide a much-needed sanctuary for visiting solitary bees. Man-made nesting material like this *can* be an effective conservation tool if used properly, but if left unmanaged, has the potential to cause more harm than good.

To avoid pest/parasite problems, it's vital to take an **active role** in managing/maintaining any nesting equipment once it is installed. Please read this guide carefully before using the tubes to ensure your local bees get the most out of their new accommodation!

ABOUT THE TUBES

Our Nesting Tubes are perfectly sized for British Red Mason bees (*Osmia bicornis*) but are also commonly occupied by Blue Mason bees (*Osmia caerulescens*) and a number of Leafcutter species, (e.g. *Megachile centucularis* / *M. ligniseca*).

If a solitary bee decides to nest in a tube, she will start at the back and work outwards. Bees make a series of cells, each containing an egg and a ball of pollen and separated with a dividing wall made of leaf segments or mud. Eventually, she will have filled the tube with these cells until there's no more room, at which point she seals up the entrance and seeks another tube to restart the process.

The type of seal the bees place on the end of the tube can help us to identify which species has nested inside. Mud caps usually denote a Mason species, whereas leaves are used by Leafcutter species'.

Once a bee has sealed up the entrance of her completed tube, she won't return to it again. At this stage, we urge you to remove/store the occupied inner layer and replace with a refill tube – see overleaf.

CORRECT NESTING TUBE PLACEMENT

Tubes should touch the back wall of your tube holder. The two layers should also line up with each other at the entrance, like this:



SITING INSTRUCTIONS

Like all solitary bee equipment, these tubes should **only** be placed outdoors when native bees are active to ensure everything remains as clean, dry and pest-free as possible – keep tubes indoors at all other times. Solitary bees are active from spring until the end of summer.

- Position your tube holder with the entrance facing **south/south-east** and secure to a wall, fence or post 1.5m above the ground.
- Angle the entrance slightly towards the ground to assist drainage and prevent nesting tubes inside getting wet. Bees can't survive in wet tubes so keeping them dry is of the utmost importance!
- Place all 30 tubes as far into the holder as possible, ensuring that the ends of the tubes are all in contact with the back wall.
- We strongly recommend placing the tubes into your holder as provided, i.e. bundled with rubber bands into bunches of ten. This helps to keep the tubes secure and should prevent birds and other predators from pulling out individual tubes.

NB: Red mason bees prefer nesting sites placed in sunny locations. If activity low, changing location may help to encourage nesting.

HOW TO REMOVE / REFILL TUBES

Removing the tubes and storing them in a secure location offers the bees a huge advantage against the predators and parasites that would otherwise be able to attack them in this vulnerable state.

Look for signs of nesting activity on a regular basis during the spring and summer months. If you notice any completed tubes, you can carefully remove the inner layer of the tube to keep the bees inside safe. Once removed, slide a clean refill tube into the empty outer layer and return the completed tube to the holder.

Occupied tubes should be stored until Autumn in a cool, dark, pest-free location - an unheated garage or shed is ideal. We recommend storing occupied tubes vertically at this time, i.e. with the entrance of the tube pointing upward, to ensure the developing bees inside are kept in contact with their pollen balls after being moved.

Each outer layer can be used over multiple seasons and re-filled multiple times each season! Re-using your outer layers increases the effectiveness of your nesting site (and is good for the environment!)