



**Foothill Chapter
California Rare Fruit Growers**

Next meeting: **Orchard Mason Bees**
Saturday, June 6, 2009

Lecture Hall A
Los Angeles County Arboretum
301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia

**Next meeting: The secret life of bees (Orchard Mason Bees, that is)
Speaker: David Szymkowski**

Yours truly will speak on my efforts to build a population of orchard mason bees (*Osmia lignaria*) in my home garden.

With honeybee populations declining, "friendly" native bees such as *O. lignaria* are becoming ever more important to help pollinate home fruit trees and even commercial orchards.

I will do a slide show and explain what you can do to start your own mason bee colony. I will also bring materials for show & tell. Unfortunately, I will not be able to bring bees to share, since at this time of year the females are done their work for the season and the larvae cannot be disturbed before winter.



Right: Orchard mason bee

Sources of mail-order bees, nesting tubes, information, etc.

Home Orchard Society, Portland, OR:
<http://www.homeorchardsociety.org/masonbees/>
masonbees@homeorchardsociety.org
503-338-8479

Knox Cellars Native Bee Pollinators, Sammamish, WA
<http://www.knoxcellars.com/>
(206) 849-5065

A few other useful sites:

<http://gardening.wsu.edu/library/inse006/inse006.htm>

<http://www.masonbeehomes.com/>

<http://www.beediverse.com/>



Right: Orchard mason bee colony, holes drilled 5/16 inch in diameter and between 5 and 6 inches deep into a block of wood. The chicken wire prevents birds and other critters from getting access. This block can hold over 500 bees, with about 100 female bees.

Left: Orchard mason bee colony, cardboard tube method. 5/16" tubes are placed in 3" ABS pipe. Tubes at bottom contain starter cocoons, tubes at top were empty and have been used as nests by emerging female bees (note the mud plugs in completed nests). Each pipe can hold tubes for 1000-1500 bees, or about 200-300 female bees.



Note: About 250 to 300 female bees per acre of orchard are recommended for pollination if no other bees are present.

Sharing table and plant raffle

Sharing Table

Members with last names starting with 'N' through 'Z', please bring your harvest to share for the Sharing Table. As always, please lend a helping hand with the clean up during and after the meeting.

Plant Raffle

Please bring extra plants, seedlings, cuttings, etc., to the next meeting, with information and instructions for care. This is a steady fundraiser for our chapter, so please make the effort to share your surplus materials.

THE FOOTHILL CHAPTER OF THE CRFG meets at 9:30 a.m. the first Saturday of alternate months (February, April, June, August, October, December) at the Arboretum of Los Angeles County, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia (just south of the 210 Freeway). There is no charge to enter the Arboretum to attend the meeting, which is usually in Lecture Hall "A". The easiest access is straight through the Gift Shop, then down the stairs to the right in the adjacent building.

CHAIRMAN: Joel Johnson (joel@aridscapes.com, foothill@crfg.org).
Newsletter: David Szymkowski (david.szymkowski@gmail.com).

Also see the website of our parent organization: www.crfg.org:

"Founded in 1968, the California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG) is the largest amateur fruit-growing organization in the world."

Date of next CRFG chapter meeting: Saturday, August 1, 2009.

Below: Bumper crop of jaboticaba from Joel Johnson

