

Weather Watch

Cave Junction

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| | Thursday, April 22 Mostly Sunny High --74 Low -- 41 |
| | Friday, April 23 Mostly Cloudy High -- 74 Low -- 43 |
| | Saturday, April 24 Showers High -- 54 Low -- 40 |
| | Sunday, April 25 Rain High -- 49 Low -- 38 |
| | Monday, April 26 Showers High -- 54 Low -- 37 |
| | Tuesday, April 27 AM Showers High -- 63 Low -- 42 |
| | Wednesday, April 28 Showers High -- 68 Low -- 44 |

Following are the high & low temperatures, and rainfall recorded at The End of the Road in O'Brien by Cheryl Johnson:

| Apr | High | Low | Rain |
|------------------|------|------|------|
| 10 | 63.6 | 36.7 | |
| 11 | 63.1 | 33.8 | |
| 12 | 71.2 | 34.9 | |
| 13 | 65.1 | 30.6 | |
| 14 | 67.9 | 32.6 | |
| 15 | 72.9 | 30.2 | |
| 16 | 76.3 | 33.3 | |
| Apr Rain: 0.0" | | | |
| YTD Rain: 47.33" | | | |



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Crawlies with Cri: by Christy Solo



(Photo by Christy Solo for the Illinois Valley News)

Small carpenter bee (genus *Ceratina*)

Most people are familiar with carpenter bees. Those big buzzers who can be seen out and about this time of year; but did you know carpenter bees come in size XS too? Meet the small carpenter bee (genus *Ceratina*).

"Small" is no understatement; there are 24 species of *Ceratina* in North America and all of them top out at under one-quarter of an inch in length. They're so small it's likely you've seen them, but not noticed them. They all but disappear in flowers like dandelions and a group of them flying together is easily mistaken for small flies or gnats.

Small carpenter bees are well worth taking a closer look at, however. These bitty metallic blue-green bees are powerful little pollinators of flowers and crops alike. They pollinate crops like beans, sesame, cowpeas and apples.

They're flower generalists, so will visit a wide variety of flowers in your yard.

With many bee species, only queens overwinter so their numbers aren't very high for early spring

pollination. With small carpenter bees, however, many adult females overwinter so they emerge in significant numbers ready to be crop and garden helpers.

Small carpenter bees are technically solitary bees; they don't have communal nests. However, several females may build nests close together. There are a very few species where females (generally mothers and daughters) will share the same nest.

Small carpenter bees build their nests in pithy burned or cut stems (stems with soft/spongy centers and hard exteriors, like blackberry). They excavate the center of the stem with their mandibles (bitey mouth parts) and use the nest for sleeping, overwintering and in spring for egg laying.

Female small carpenter bees will excavate up to 11 inches down into a stem, then lay an egg, tuck in provisions, seal off the mini chamber - rinse and repeat almost to the top of the stem.

The female will then sleep in the top chamber, guarding her young until

they have all hatched.

The whole brood works together to ensure they all survive as well. Because the eggs at the bottom of the stem are laid first, they'll generally hatch first.

So, how do they get past their siblings? The oldest bee chews apart the cell cap above it, then packs it down at the base of its own cell.

If the sibling above it is not mature, the older bee carefully moves it down to the newly created floor.

If the sibling above is mature, the eldest goes past them and chews up the cell cap above, then passes that material to the younger bee (s) below. Then those siblings pack the material at the bottom of the nest and move and adjust any remaining immature pupae.

The process is slow and meticulous; it can take eight days for the eldest to finally emerge from the nest.

Small carpenter bees can be found throughout our area in a wide variety of habitats. They'll be on the wing through at least September being sparkly and helping crops and flowers grow.

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