

Mason bees buzz to life in early spring

For mason bees, the wait for their first meal is a long one, six months if it's a day.

There's no TV, no smart-phone, not even a book to while away the time as these solitary bees hang out in their tight cocoons waiting for the cool temperatures of early spring to break them out of lethargy, to convene at the floral banquet waiting for them among the branches of fruit trees.

And because honeybees and other pollinators haven't made an appearance yet, there's more sweetness for the native mason bees.

"Mason bees fill a spot in the season when other pollinators like honeybees are not out," said Brooke Edmunds, a horticulturist with Oregon State University Extension Service. "They're really important for fruit trees, especially in cool, wet areas."

After emerging in March — perhaps February this year because of the mild winter — the small, bluish bees start foraging for food for the next generation and combing for suitable nesting sites.

"They're solitary, non-aggressive bees, so they're very different from honeybees; they don't form hives," said Edmunds, author of the new OSU Extension publication Nurturing Mason Bees in Your Backyard in Western Oregon.

Instead, mason bees, most commonly the native blue orchard mason bee (*Osmia lignaria*), look for cracks and crevices that fit their need for small spaces where they crawl in and lay eggs. They might find the appropriate spots in wood



KYM POKORNY
Your Garden

bored by other insects, siding on buildings or nesting blocks filled with tubes provided by gardeners.

"Gardeners can purchase cocoons containing adult bees as a way of introducing new mason bee populations to their yards," Edmunds said. "Unfortunately, most garden centers and mail-order sources are probably sold out by now. But you can buy nesting houses and tubes any time. Place these in your garden and you might get lucky and they could nest in them this year."

To hedge your bets, provide what mason bees need. Fill homemade or purchased nesting houses with cocoons in late winter or spring. You can get elaborate and remove the cocoons each fall, clean them of frass and mites, store them in the refrigerator over winter and reinsert them in the tubes in spring. Or choose the easy way; hang the tubes and wait for the bees to find them. Instructions for both methods are included in Edmunds' guide.

By far the mason bee's preferred food comes from early-blooming fruit trees like apples, pears, plums and cherries. So plant one or two. If you've got a small lot, choose columnar or dwarf cultivars.

Though not as dear to the bee's palate, other plants qualify to attract them. Look to crabapples, flower-



PHOTO BY RAMESH SAGILI

In three months, the female mason bee forages for food, finds a nest and produces the next generation, all while pollinating fruit trees and other plants.

ing currant, elderberry, huckleberry, forsythia, pieris and Oregon grape. They'll head straight for dandelion, Edmunds said, which are in good supply this time of year.

Since mason bees travel only short distances, about 200-300 feet, their favorite plants need to be planted near to nesting spots or away they'll go. You'll also need to provide small patches of clay mud, something in abundance in the Willamette Valley. But if you've covered your soil with mulch, it's a good idea to push away a little bit to create a mud pool for them. If the soil dries out, give it a misting. Alternately, put a tray out and fill it with moist clay soil.

The female mason bees use the clay soil to wall up their eggs, which are deposited in the tubes or crevices with nectar and pollen they've rolled into little balls, Edmunds ex-

plained. They'll continue to alternate wall, food, egg and wall until they come to the end of the tube or crevice and then wall it up for the next eight months. The eggs develop into small larva that spin cocoons where the adults form. Come spring when temperatures rise to 50 to 60 degrees, the adults break through the cocoon, chew through the clay and fly out to start the process all over again.

In their short three-month life, these single-minded bees do an important job for gardeners. Most significantly they efficiently pollinate prized fruit trees, giving a markedly increased yield. But consider a more altruistic reason, Edmunds said. Mason bees, like other beneficial insects, help diversify the garden, leading to a healthier backyard ecosystem, healthier humans and a healthier planet.

MI TOWN

We've enjoyed some beautiful springtime weather here in MI Town, which has given us the opportunity to weed lawns, prepare gardens for planting, walk around town and see what's new in all the community shops and stores. The apple trees are blooming and the lilacs are just beginning to share their delicate flowers with all of us. We're sharing our early morning walks with butterflies and bird-songs and the occasional rat-tat-tat of a neighborhood woodpecker.

April is both Child Abuse Prevention and Pet Appreciation Month. At first glance, this appears to be a no-brainer, because we all want to believe that children and pets enhance our lives and make every day worth living — and for most of us, they definitely do.



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

Sometimes, though people are over-stressed for many reasons, whether its unemployment, poverty, drugs or alcohol abuse, and they take out their frustrations on family members. Maybe the dog takes a bite out of a rug or the cat barfs in the middle of your lap. Or your toddler pulls the lamp off the table and it all comes crashing down. Most of us who have reached a certain age have experienced these things — and much worse — but it's not always easy to take a few minutes to calmly assess the situation without wanting to just strike

out at what, or who, is within reach. That impulsive action can bring about life-changing consequences and tragedy to everyone involved.

Polk County's Health Department has resources available for families and individuals who need some help to get through stressful situations. The crisis intervention telephone line can be reached at 503-623-9289, and is staffed with people who can help. There are mental health services available for adults and children, addiction services, and drug and alcohol treatment. Check the website www.co.polk.or.us to find a link for some answers and much-needed assistance when you feel you're at the end of your rope.

This week is National Li-

brary Week (April 11-16), and Independence and Monmouth libraries are offering Food for Fines, which gives readers the option of paying overdue book fines with canned food. For each can of food donated, \$1 will be deducted from your fine. Your book fines are taken care of, and our local food bank benefits to help families in our communities. Please check with each library about what foods can be donated, and please don't bring dented or unlabeled cans for donation.

Please vote to help the Monmouth Public Library receive a grant for more children's programs and even a children's garden. You can vote once a day, every day until Monday at www.seedsofchange.org. Find a garden: Monmouth, Oregon, and cast your vote.

Congratulations! Jimmie & Sammie on your 5th Anniversary of DIAMONDS GARDEN

Cuisine the equal of Hong Kong or mainland China right here in Dallas, Oregon!

It's not like her.

Mom has always been so patient, but now when I ask her questions she gets angry.

We can help.

ADRC 1-855-ORE-ADRC
Aging and Disability Resource Connection of OREGON
HelpForAlz.org

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM

BIRTHS

McCrae

Alyssa Michelle Dion Lee McCrae was born at 12:26 a.m. on April 1 to Jennifer Waldron and Paul McCrae, both of Monmouth, at the Salem Family Birth Center.

She weighed 9 pounds and was 21 inches long. Alyssa joins Christian, 15, Adriana, 11, Mahala, 10, Alivia, 4 and Jone, 1.

Grandparents are David and Thelma Waldron, of Dallas; James and Geri McCrae, of Arizona; and Bruce and Blanch Jaller, of Virginia.

West

Jacob Bentley West was born at 11:24 p.m. on April 1 to Bobbie Palmer and Michael West, both of West Salem, at the Salem Family Birth Center.

He weighed 6 pounds, 4 ounces, and was 18 inches long.

Jacob joins Michael, 19, Jonathon, 16, Robert, 11, and Ashley, 7.

Hernandez Romero

Gabriel Haniel Hernandez Romero was born at 5:40 p.m. on March 27 to Maria Romero and Heliverio Hernandez, both of Independence, at the Silverton Family Birth Center.

He weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

Gabriel joins Jessica, 16, and Gerardo, 10. Grandparents are Concepcion Valtierra and Jose Romero, and Rocina Rosales and Cristino Hernandez.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Continued from page 7A

TUESDAY, APRIL 19

• **Dallas Wingdingers RC Flying Club** — 7 p.m., Whitworth Elementary School library, 1151 SE Miller Ave., Dallas. 503-623-7288.

• **Polk County Coin Club** — 7 p.m., Monmouth Senior Center, 180 Warren St. S., Monmouth. 503-362-9123.

• **Overeaters Anonymous** — Noon to 1 p.m., Salem Health West Valley, 525 SE Washington St., Dallas. Support group meets in the conference room immediately inside the front doors.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20

• **Helping Hands Emergency Food Bank** — 10 a.m. to noon, Monmouth Christian Church, 959 Church St. W., Monmouth. For eligible community members; available every Wednesday. 541-404-6517.

• **Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program Food Bank** — 1:30 to 6:30 p.m., 888 Monmouth Cutoff Road, Building E, Dallas. Weekly distribution for eligible community members. 503-831-5634.

• **Day-2-Day Diabetes Support Group** — 3 to 4 p.m., West Valley Hospital (main conference room inside main entrance), 525 SE Washington St., Dallas. 503-623-7323.

• **Bingo at the Farm** — 6:30 p.m., Rogue Farms Hopyard, 3590 Wigrich Road, Independence. All ages welcome. Free; food and beverages available for purchase. 503-838-9813.

• **Brew and BS: The Old Testament** — 7 p.m., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 1486 SW Levens St., Dallas. A lecture series on the Old Testament. Bring brew of choice — coffee, tea, chai, beer, wine, cider. 435-503-4304.

RIDE ON. GET MORE.

Our new, affordable motorcycle rates include coverage other companies charge as extras. Things like: help repairing or replacing your protective gear, costs incurred from being stranded and emergency roadside assistance. CALL ME TODAY.

Barb Mylnechuk Ins Agency Inc
Barb Mylnechuk, Agent
1697 Monmouth St
Independence, OR 97351
Bus: 503-606-0066

1501392 State Farm, Home Office, Bloomington, IL

See something interesting happening in Polk County? Call us at 503-623-2373. We check out your news tips!

INDEPENDENCE CINEMA 8
450 S. 2nd St., Independence
Showtimes 503-606-3000
www.IndependenceCinema8.com

Matinees are all shows before 6pm. New pricing for matinees are: Adult \$7.25 Children \$6.75 • Senior \$7.00 Pricing does not reflect 3D showings.

Friday - Saturday April 15 - April 16

DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT (Digital) (PG13) (1:50) 6:45
HARDCORE HENRY (Digital) (R) (11:30 4:30) 9:20
ZOOPTOPIA (Digital 2D) (PG) (11:40 2:10 4:45) 7:20 9:40
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (Digital) (PG13) (11:35 2:50) 6:10 9:20
JUNGLE BOOK (Digital 2D) (PG) (11:35 2:05 4:35) 7:05 9:25
THE BOSS (Digital) (R) (12:00 2:25 4:50) 7:15 9:30
CRIMINAL (Digital) (R) (11:45 2:15 4:50) 7:30 9:55
GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 (Digital) (PG) (1:35) 6:50
MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN (Digital) (PG) (4:15) 9:30
BARBERSHOP: THE NEXT CUT (Digital) (PG13) (11:50 2:10 4:40) 7:10 9:40

Sunday April 17

DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT (Digital) (PG13) (1:50) 6:45
HARDCORE HENRY (Digital) (R) (11:30 4:30)
ZOOPTOPIA (Digital 2D) (PG) (11:40 2:10 4:45) 7:20
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (Digital) (PG13) (11:35 2:50) 6:10
JUNGLE BOOK (Digital 2D) (PG) (11:35 2:05 4:35) 7:05
THE BOSS (Digital) (R) (12:00 2:25 4:50) 7:15
CRIMINAL (Digital) (R) (11:45 2:15 4:50) 7:30
GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 (Digital) (PG) (1:35) 6:50
MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN (Digital) (PG) (4:15)
BARBERSHOP: THE NEXT CUT (Digital) (PG13) (11:50 2:10 4:40) 7:10

Monday - Thursday April 18 - April 21

DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT (Digital) (PG13) (1:50) 6:45
HARDCORE HENRY (Digital) (R) (4:30)
ZOOPTOPIA (Digital 2D) (PG) (2:10 4:45) 7:20
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (Digital) (PG13) (2:50) 6:10
JUNGLE BOOK (Digital 2D) (PG) (2:05 4:35) 7:05
THE BOSS (Digital) (R) (2:25 4:50) 7:15
CRIMINAL (Digital) (R) (2:15 4:50) 7:30
GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 (Digital) (PG) (1:35) 6:50
MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN (Digital) (PG) (4:15)
BARBERSHOP: THE NEXT CUT (Digital) (PG13) (2:10 4:40) 7:10

Pencil us in!
www.polkio.com
Polk County Itemizer-Observer

Sudoku
Difficulty: ★★★★★☆

Solution on Page 3A

						8		9
		4		7		2		
	7			8	1			
2		3			7			
8	1		3		5			7
			8			3		
						9	5	4
		8		9				
3				2				1

How to do Sudoku
Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.

By Ben Arnoldy

It's that time again! Advertise in the 2016-2017 Polk County Telephone Directory!
New to the area? Number change? Give us a call at the Itemizer-Observer 503-623-2373