

Welcome to our new Garden Residents!!

There is a lot of buzz (!) in gardening circles about pollinators. The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge is registering gardens friendly to pollinators and we are proud that the Bishop's Garden is listed as a partner. <http://pollinator.org/million-pollinator-garden-challenge>

From that website:

This is “a nationwide call to action to preserve and create gardens and landscapes that help revive the health of bees, butterflies, birds, bats and other pollinators across America. We will move millions of individuals, kids and families outdoors and make a connection between pollinators and the healthy food people eat.”



Cocoons -
bees-in-waiting



Mason bee just hatched from its cocoon

Now we at the Cathedral Close are doing more than being listed and planting pollinator-attracting flowers; early this month we became home to the cocoons of some soon-to-hatch mason bees, or *Osmia* 'blue orchard' bees. These bees are stingless and do not require hives. They are champion pollinators that make nests in reeds and natural holes, creating individual cells for its offspring that are separated by mud dividers. Mason bees are non-aggressive and non-colonizing solitary bees that pollinate orchards



and gardens. Although they can nest in natural ways, we decided to make them extra welcome by providing several tubes now attached to a few trees around the gardens.

If you should spot one of the tubes, kindly observe it from a distance. We were given a number of cocoons that had begun to hatch in recent warm days but with the current cold spell are quiet for the moment. The bees are not honeybees, so we will not expect to harvest a money crop next fall. The benefits may not be readily apparent, but we are harnessing nature to help the larger world and to reverse in a small way the depredations of pollution, city air, chemical use and shrinking natural environment that have caused declines in the insect pollinator species. We hope to see our new residents at work this spring.

The three All Hallows Guild-sponsored garden interns arriving next month for the summer will be assigned a learning and research project that we hope will move us further in recognizing the assets of pollinators and help us refine our practices to be most favorable toward these birds and insects.

