**Solitary bees… RED MASON BEE NESTS**

**Solitary bees are harmless and not aggressive.** **They do not** live in hives, make honey, build honeycombs, or swarm.

All the **pollination** benefits, no sting. ... In this case, **mason bees**, so named because they build their nests using dabs of mud to pack around each egg. These gentle, solitary **bees** are **pollinating** powerhouses. One **mason bee** can do the **pollinating** work of 100 honeybees.

**RED MASON BEE NESTS – AUTUMN HOUSEKEEPING**

For those of you who have Red Mason Bee nests out on your plots or in your gardens, now is the time to bring them inside for the winter, before the first frosts. Storing them in frost-free shed or garage is ideal, place in a sealed cardboard box.

Unfortunately the weather has not been good for pollinating insects in general, and you may find many of the tubes have not been used. Better luck next year, we hope!

Take the tubes out of the container, and put them in a cardboard box amongst some loosely-crumpled newspaper. This insulates them and also lets them breathe and dry out. If they are stored damp, mould can set in which will kill the eggs and larvae developing in the tubes.

If you have any tubes which were filled last year, and you marked them with a dab of Tippex on the mud seal before putting them out this spring, it will now be obvious which tubes failed to hatch out this summer, as the marked mud seal will still be intact. This always happens to a few tubes. Riddle these out with a piece of wire, re-inserting the black plug at the rear end, and store them with the filled tubes for use again next year. You will lose the white liner, but that doesn’t matter.