



## BeeAware! Bee House Maintenance



Bee nests require routine maintenance and regular replacement to prevent the build up of parasites and diseases that may affect the developing brood. In the early spring (around May), after the previous season's bees have emerged from their sealed nesting tubes, replace the used and/or diseased nesting tubes with fresh nesting tubes (instructions below).

**Straw replacement is absolutely necessary each spring and is critical to the success of the bee houses! This cannot be stressed enough.** If these bee houses are left for too long without being cleaned, bacteria, diseases, parasites, and fungi can all find their way into your houses and end up growing out of control and spreading to all of the bees living inside! In this way, the houses could eventually become a terrible death trap instead of a safe haven- working against all efforts to provide a safe habitat in the first place!

To Fill Bee House with Nesting Tubes:

1. Cut the paper straws to about 5.25-5.50" in length.
2. Pinch and collapse  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (about a thumbnail's length) at the end of the straw. Then tightly roll the flattened  $\frac{1}{2}$ " until the straw measures to roughly under 5". This will seal the end of the straw to help prevent the spread of parasites.
3. The straws should be just under 5" and should not protrude past the bee house side walls. Pack the straws into the wooden nesting house with the open holes facing outward. About 70 straws should fit snugly in the house. Pack tightly enough so that no tubes slide out when the house is tipped.



To Replace Old and Used Nesting Tubes:

1. Pull the used (now empty) and/or diseased nesting tubes from the house and replace them with fresh tubes. Discard the removed straws.





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### To Order More Paper Straws:

8mm diameter paper nesting straws (Mason Bees)

- <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/ecochoice-7-3-4-kraft-giant-unwrapped-compostable-paper-straw-case/485UPG7KFT.html>

6mm diameter paper nesting straws (Leafcutter Bees)

- <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/ecochoice-7-3-4-white-jumbo-unwrapped-paper-straw-pack/999UPJ7WH.html>

### For More Information:

- Bee Aware! A Native Bee Stewardship Program - <https://bluehillheritagetrust.org/bee-aware-a-native-bee-stewardship-program/>
- Guide to building and managing a mason bee hotel - <https://colinpurrington.com/2019/05/guide-to-diy-mason-bee-houses/>
- How to Make and Manage a Bee Hotel: Instructions that Really Work - <https://www.foxleas.com/make-a-bee-hotel.asp>

If you have any questions, please email [beeawaremaine@gmail.com](mailto:beeawaremaine@gmail.com)