

Mason Bees and Miner Bees

It may be obvious but to clarify, mason bees burrow into your walls whilst the miner bee burrows into your lawn. Depending upon your viewpoint and the amount of damage caused, either can be considered a pest but mostly they're tolerated especially in small numbers and particularly as the mason bee cannot sting humans and the miner bee will only very rarely sting.



The mason bee can be present in large numbers although they are considered solitary as each female uses her own small tunnel in which to nest. They can present a problem particularly in properties with old, soft mortar where after some years of burrowing re-pointing may be required.

They will return after re-pointing though and will start to burrow all over again around the new mortar. Some success has been reported through the use of mason bee houses, which contain many tubes to act as substitute nest sites for the bees. These are doubly beneficial in that they allow these great pollinators to continue to thrive in your garden without damaging your walls. The houses should be installed on the same walls on which the bees already tunnel. These will face to the east. You can also install the houses on nearby fence posts, sheds, garden walls or even trees just as long as the houses face to the east.



In sandy soil, miner bees can also be present in large numbers and can do a great deal of damage to a lawn although, of course, this rather depends on how good you like your lawn to be. If you have a bowling-green type lawn then these are indeed very unwelcome visitors whereas if your lawn resembles a meadow then you may not even notice their presence. As with the mason bee, each female creates a tunnel in which to nest and it is the spoils from these tunnels which can ruin your lawn.

Both types of bee can be treated with a residual insecticide but I would recommend that you think carefully as to whether you can tolerate them or maybe even provide alternative accommodation for them. You should also bear in mind that applying an insecticide for miner bees will kill every invertebrate insect in your lawn including those which are good for your lawn. These bees are good- guys and provide great benefits in the form of pollination being considered far, far better at it even than honey bees.

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