

A Bug's Life

Leafcutter bees

Family: Megachilidae, Genus: *Megachile*

Fun facts

- Native and solitary bee
- Over 240 species in N. America
- Important pollinator of crops (alfalfa)
- Active June to September
- Two generations/season
- Female leafcutter bees use jaws to cut circles in plant material (leaves, petals) to be used for nesting cells
- Unlikely to sting, even when handled

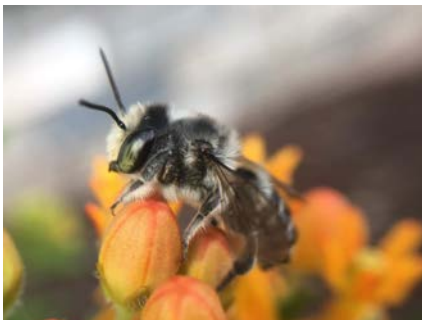
Identification

Damage: Circular shapes removed from any broadleaf deciduous plant

Leafcutter bee: 3/16"-1/4" long, stout-bodied, large jaws, black with light alternating bands. Females have pollen-collecting hair on underside of abdomen (scopa) and black eyes. Males have long antennae, green eyes and no scopa.

Management

- Damage to plants may look unsightly, but will not kill plants
- No recommendations for the control of solitary bees, but some may want to provide food, water and nesting sites
- Nesting cavities include stems, straws and natural or human-drilled holes
- Predators and parasites occur in bee hotels, so maintenance is encouraged



Photos: J. Green