

# PUGNACIOUS LEAFCUTTING BEE

## Hymenoptera: Megachilidae

### *Megachile pugnata*

# Bug of the Month



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*Megachile pugnata*, the pugnacious leafcutting bee, gets its name from its tendency to defend its nests in a quick-tempered manner and is only found in North America. *M. pugnata* is 1 of 33 solitary leafcutting bee species in Pennsylvania. A female will establish her own nest in hollow tubes. She will use her scissor-like mandibles, or jaw, to cut pieces of leaves in order to prepare her nest. She then takes foraging trips to collect pollen which she carries on stiff hairs on her abdomen called scopa. Once she collects

enough pollen, she lays her egg, and uses another leaf cut to seal that cell, and eventually the nest once its full.

Like other bees, she will collect pollen and nectar to provide for herself, and her young. They primarily pollinate Asteraceae, the daisy family, and are effective pollinators for food crops like melons and cranberries. Adult pugnacious leafcutting bees emerge in early spring, forage until early fall, and are most abundant in July. Females live approximately 2 months and lay 35 to 40 eggs in

various nesting cavities. Males live an even shorter life, dying after they mate.

For more information on how to help support pugnacious leafcutting bees, visit the Penn State Center for Pollinator Research website to learn more about creating pollinator gardens and solitary bee nesting sites.



[pollinators.psu.edu](http://pollinators.psu.edu)

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