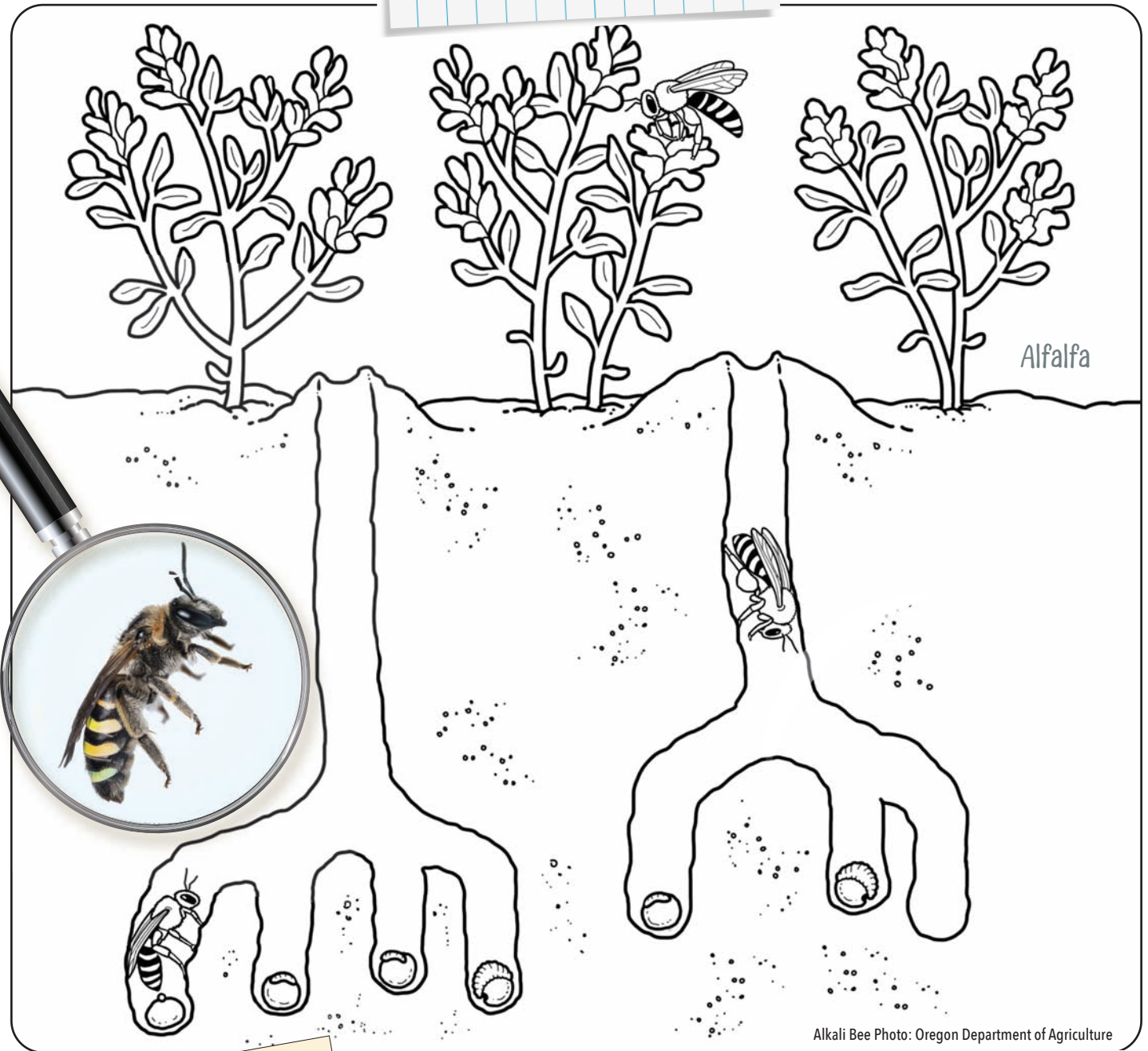


Alkali Bee Nests



Alkali Bee Photo: Oregon Department of Agriculture

Field Notes:

Alkali bees, like alfalfa leafcutting bees, pollinate alfalfa flowers to make alfalfa seed.

From the seed, farmers grow hay to feed many different types of animals. Even chickens like alfalfa hay! These bees nest in the ground and are very picky; they love salty, moist and crumbly soil. Some farmers have figured out how to create the same conditions on their farms that these bees like in the wild. At these sites, thousands of females build nests side-by-side, packing their nests with alfalfa pollen. After the females lay an egg, the hungry alkali bee larvae consume the pollen and complete their development underground. The alkali bees of the Pacific Northwest region (Oregon, Washington, Idaho) are the only ground-nesting bees in the world managed by farmers.



The next time you eat a chicken egg, thank an alkali bee!