

Why Help the Honeybees?

Since 2006, over three million honeybees in the U.S. (and billions worldwide) have died, and we don't exactly know why. The rapid depletion of the honeybee population is notable for many reasons, one being that approximately one-third of the food we eat results from pollinating bees. The USDA reports that this bee die-off threatens \$15 billion worth of crops—all of which rely on honeybee pollination. Some of the foods mentioned were oranges, apples, strawberries, tomatoes, blueberries, carrots, coffee, almonds, and soybeans.

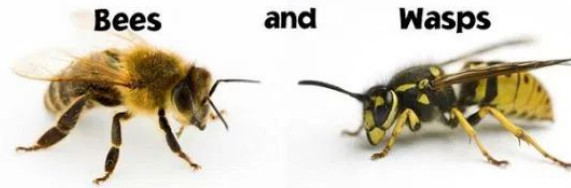
In 2008 several farmers reported to a U.S. House Agriculture committee that the honeybee crisis might cause a substantial increase in food prices. This bee decline, now known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), does not have an officially known cause, but likely suspects include pesticides, habitat loss, parasites and loss of biodiversity. While researchers determine how to address CCD, many others are stepping up to help honeybees. See **What Can YOU Do?** for simple ways you can “bee” a friend!

Adapted from: <http://thehoneybeeconservancy.org/act-today/>



Bee Aware, Not Afraid

Helpful hints to tell the difference between



Bees	and	Wasps
Fuzzy		Little to no hair
Help humans by pollinating our plants		Help humans by eating other insects
Eat pollen and nectar		Eat human food that is laying around
Gentle in nature and rarely sting		Aggressive and ready to sting
Legs are usually hidden when flying		Legs hang down when flying



<https://bartramsgarden.org/bees-vs-wasps-bad-rap/>

Many common herbicides hurt bees. Try this homemade version of an often used weed killer. Our precious pollinators will thank you.

Homemade “Roundup”

In a large spray bottle, mix the ingredients below.
Spray directly onto weeds on a sunny day.

- 1/2 gallon of vinegar (any kind)
- 1/2 cup of salt
- 2 tablespoons of dish soap
- 5 drops of orange essential oil (optional)

“BEE” A Good Raider



Prepared for the Cove Creek School Community and
Bee Ambassadors Everywhere

What Can YOU Do?

Here are some ways you and your family can help our favorite, fuzzy pollinators:

- 1. Let dandelions and clover grow in your yard.** Don't worry if your grass doesn't look perfect! These "weeds" are two of the bees' favorite food sources, so let them grow in your yard and allow your landscape to be a little more natural. It will also save you time, money and effort, plus the bees will feast.
- 2. Don't use commercial pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.** These chemicals are harmful to bees. Plus they're also often hazardous to humans and our soil and water supply as well. RoundUp is a common weed killer that is believed to be hurt bees, so avoid using it. (See **Homemade "Roundup"** for a bee-friendly alternative that works!)
- 3. Add your family's name to petitions that discourage the use of neonicotinoids.** This is a frequently used class of pesticides that is and believed to be a significant culprit in CCD.
- 4. Eat more honey (and buy it from a local source).** Unlike large honey companies, local beekeepers are more likely to be concerned about the health of their bees than the money they can make from them. Plus their sweet product does not travel far to reach your home either. Local honey can usually be bought at your farmers' market and is often found at local health food or even grocery stores. It usually costs a few dollars more than the commercial options, but it's healthier and also supports more local honey production.

Adapted from:
<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/7-ways-to-help-honey-bees.html>
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2008/may/13/wildlife.endangeredspecies>

5. Become a beekeeper or offer to help out one. Beekeeping is an enjoyable and interesting hobby. And you get to eat your own honey! Every year local beekeeping associations have classes to help new people learn all about bees. If you're not ready for a hive of your own, then just make friends with a nearby beekeeper and offer to help and learn a lot in the process.

6. Invite a local beekeeper to use some space for a beehive in your yard. Many people like the idea raising bees, but not everyone has the space for it, especially in urban areas. If you have some property, contact your local beekeeping association and offer your site. Your garden and fruit trees would love it!

7. Plant bee-friendly flowers. This not only helps the honeybees, but also makes your yard beautiful. Bees love many flowers: bee balm, borage, asters, lavender, thyme, mint, rosemary, honeysuckle, poppies, sunflowers, marigolds, salvia, butterfly bush, clematis, echinacea, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, fennel, yellow hyssop, milkweed, goldenrod, and many more.

8. Buy organic. Organic food is produced without the use of commercial pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides. This makes them more bee-friendly than conventionally grown products. So read your food labels and display signs so you know what you're buying (and what you're not)!

9. Share your bee knowledge. Talk to your friends, family and neighbors about the plight of the honeybee to help build more positive "buzz" for the bees.

10. Help protect swarms. Bees sometimes swarm, which is a natural process that allows a colony to increase their numbers. If you see a swarm in a house or tree, contact the local authorities so they will alert a local beekeeper who can safely move the bees. Honeybees in a swarm are usually very gentle and present very little danger, but don't approach the "lost colony." Save that for an expert.

11. Ask your local and national officials to improve research into honeybee health. CCD is a worldwide problem. We need scientists to continue their research so that we can find the definitive cause and find solutions to help our fuzzy pollinators. Pollination by honeybees contributes substantially to the agricultural economy. Write letters and emails and make phone calls to government officials encouraging them to support further research.

12. Learn more about these fascinating insects. Bees are just amazing! Honeybees have been on this earth for a very long time and are ideally adapted to their natural environment. Without honeybees the environment would be dramatically diminished. There are tons of great books and websites where you can learn more!

13. Be nice to bees. Remember that when treated properly, bees are good neighbors. They only sting when provoked. If a bee flies near you, stay calm and move away slowly. The bee should soon lose interest in you. Bees regard dark clothing as a threat because they think you could be a bear or skunk, so if you know you'll be outside near honeybees, wear lighter colored clothing. Be nice to bees, and they will be nice to you.

