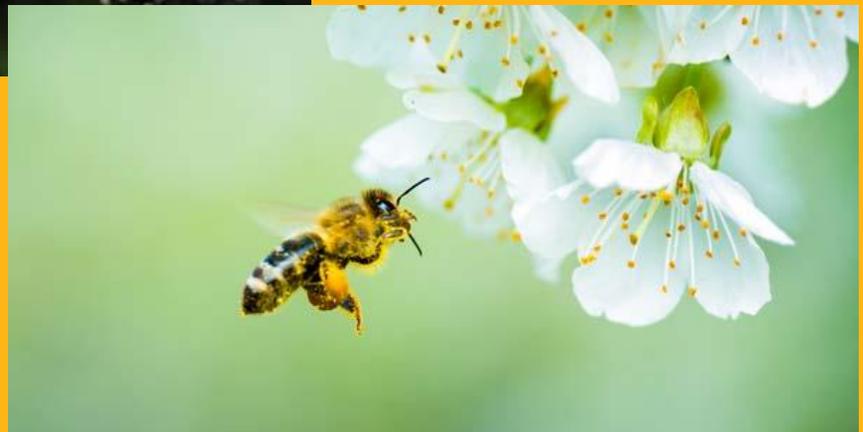


SAVE THE BEES



Honey bees are the wild domestic pollinators of the world. A single bee colony can pollinate 300 million flowers each day. I can't even picture what 300 million flowers looks like!

All types of fruits, nuts, and vegetables are pollinated by these fuzzy yellow critters, which levels out to 90% of the world's nutrition.

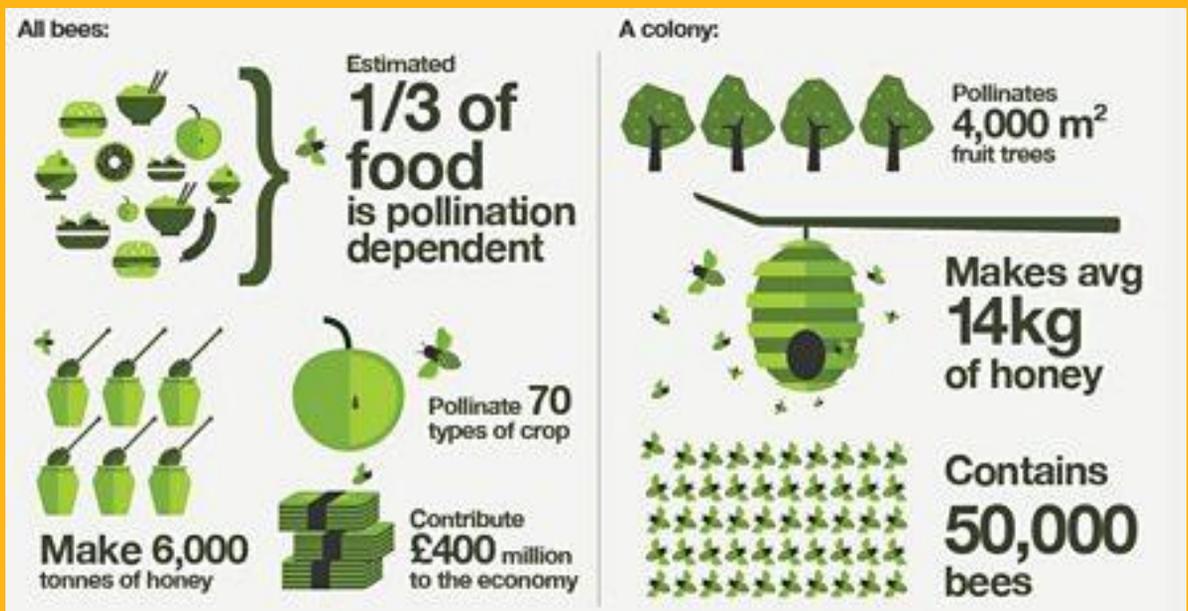


Unfortunately, this is where our amazement takes a turn... our bees are dying. And even worse, we know why. Once the decrease in bees became more prominent, it was time to do some research.

Scientists have concluded a variety of factors:

- pesticides
- drought
- habitat destruction
- nutrition deficit
- air pollution
- and global warming

The top two are pesticides and habitat loss, which humans are largely responsible for.



WHY BEES MATTER



Bees and other pollinators help three out of four crops to grow



Crops include fruits and seeds across the globe



Improving bee density and diversity boosts crop yields



Pollinators affect 35 percent of global agricultural land



Bees support the production of 87 of the leading food crops worldwide.

Scientists started to notice a dramatic die-off in 2006.

Typically, a colony will decline by 5-10% over the winter, replacing those lost in the spring. A bad year would consist of a 15-20% loss. Recently, U.S. winters have created a loss of 30-50% bees per colony.

Habitat loss and pesticides go hand-in-hand. Chemical companies advocate no change in their deadly “pesticide cocktail” because *selling poison to the world’s farmers is profitable*. With all this use of pesticides by industrial agribusiness, bees’ habitats begin to shrink. To reverse the world bee decline, we must start with our dysfunctional and destructive agricultural system.



Here's how to start:

1. Ban the seven most dangerous pesticides.
2. Protect pollinator health by preserving wild habitat.
3. Restore ecological agriculture.



“The nation of Bhutan has led the world in adopting a 100 percent organic farming policy. Mexico has banned genetically modified corn to protect its native corn varieties. Eight European countries have banned genetically modified crops and Hungary has burned more than 1,000 acres of corn contaminated with genetically modified varieties. In India, scientist Vandana Shiva and a network of small farmers have built an organic farming resistance to industrial agriculture over two decades.” –



www.greenpeace.org



Countries all over the world were able to reduce bee colony decline for years by switching their farming style. Ecological farming restores soil nutrients with natural composting (which we discussed during Earth Week), takes advantage of the natural ecosystem services, water filtration, pollination, oxygen production, and disease and pest control. They also refuse to use pesticides and fertilizers all together.

WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CHANGE THE WORLD, BUT WE CAN IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY.

Besides producing delicious local honey and wax, honeybees pollinate garden flowers and plants, which I've heard you all enjoy! To make our journey successful, we are going to buzz our way through the pros and cons of becoming beekeepers.





PROS TO BEEKEEPING

1. **HONEY:** Fresh honey tastes amazing! It also feels good to be the owners who boosted a single bee to produce 1/12 teaspoon. (A colony consists of thousands of bees, so that's a lot of 1/12 teaspoons).
2. **BEESWAX:** While bees use the wax to form the structure of their home, we as humans use it in candle-making and cosmetics. Many creams and chap sticks containing beeswax are better healers for the skin than others.
3. **POLLINATION:** Raising honey bees ensures better pollination of flowering plants. More food and more wildlife bring gorgeous life to ourselves and our land.
4. **DILIGENT WORKERS:** The saying “busy as a bee” shouldn't go unnoticed. Bees are constant workers, without monitoring or motivation. As we build our bee farm we must spend, on average, one hour per week during the warm season on colony management.

CONS TO BEEKEEPING

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- 1. NON-NATIVES:** Honey bees are non-natives and are out-competing our native bees in the wild. As a community, if we choose to produce honey, honey bees are the way to go. But if we decide we would like to pollinate food, a solitary bee house is a better choice. This would include native plants and wildflowers to help attract those of our specific area.
- 2. STINGS:** Ouch! This one is gonna hurt. We'll have to make sure those around us are not allergic to bee stings because as we know, they can be deadly. Once we learn how to properly manage a hive, the episodes of stinging will lessen.
- 3. COST OF SUPPLIES:** Investments include things like a hive, proper protective clothing and gear, a smoker, hive tools, and a colony of bees. However, searching through prices will be extremely worth it.

CONS TO BEEKEEPING

CONTINUED

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- 4. THE FIRST YEAR MAY BE A TOUGH ONE:** Patience is key with beekeeping. On top of learning the ins and outs ourselves, the bees must start a community of their own. Producing wax for a home structure, raising the young, and storing honey for the winter season doesn't leave a lot left for us.
- 5. BEE DISEASES:** While we might not use pesticides, others do. Pesticides and parasites are the most common troubles encountered by our little fuzzy workers. Together, we must learn how to keep our bees healthy and to inquire any problems we might encounter.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!