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Honey Bee Facts

Honey bees, *Apis mellifera* L., have been providing humans with their hive products (honey and beeswax) for thousands of years. Honey bees were imported into North America in 1622. Our modern agricultural system has been built around the industrious honey bee, although other bees also play an important role.

The majority of honey bee hives are managed by beekeepers. In urban and garden settings, it is becoming more common to see a single or a handful of honey bee hives – usually wooden boxes painted white or other light colors. When approaching these colonies, give honey bees space and don't approach their hive unless you are an experienced beekeeper; even beekeepers minimize the time they spend working bees.

Prepared by the Forage and Nutrition Task Force of the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC)

Photo Bill Lewis

Honey Bees How You Can Help Them

We Depend on Honey Bees

One out of three bites of food we eat depends on pollinators. Some estimates say that honey bees are responsible for 80% of all pollination today – that's most of our pollinator-dependent diet! The global honey trade is a billion dollar industry. \$217 billion in global crop production is dependent on insect pollination. Honey bees pollinate about 100 crops in the U.S. and are responsible for these major crops:

Almonds \$3 bil

Apples \$50.2 mil

Blueberries \$131.2 mil

Cucumbers \$16.4 mil

Melons (cantaloupe and honeydew)

\$400 mil

Peaches \$5.9 mil



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**POLLINATOR
PARTNERSHIP**

Photo Diane Wilson

What YOU Can Do for Honey Bees

- Provide honey bee friendly habitat.
- Work with your employer, parks district, land conservancy, department of transportation, botanical garden, schools, and others to enhance pollinator habitat.
- As a land owner or manager, provide access to forage habitat to beekeepers for their honey bees. Information on the tax benefits of producing habitat for honey bees is available at www.americanbeeproject.com.
- Use the Pollinator Partnership's Ecoregional Planting Guides for a list of pollinator-attractive plant species native to your region (<http://pollinator.org/guides.htm>).
- Honey bees are attracted to many common easy to grow plants, such as rosemary, beardtongue, purple coneflower and common sunflower.

Support Beekeepers

Beekeepers are the honey bees health plan. Honey bees are susceptible to bacterial infection, viruses, parasites, lack of suitable forage and water, and pesticides. A beekeeper must pay attention to all these things; the job is year round, all hours of day and night. Good nutritional health is critical for honey bees to combat these many assaults, and clean, plentiful, diverse pollinator habitat is the key to the honey bee's diet. Buy local honey and at all times ONLY buy honey made in the U.S. This will not only give you a reliable and delicious product, it will help beekeepers and their honey bees.



You may also be interested in the following brochures available at www.pollinator.org

- **Protecting Monarchs**
- **Solving Your Pest Problems Without Harming Pollinators**
- **Your School and Pollinators**

No Fear of Stings

Many people are wary of insects such as bees and wasps. About 0.5% of children and 3% of adults have sting allergies from bees, wasps, and ants which can sometimes lead to systemic reactions. Reduce the risk of a sting from bees in your yard or garden, remember:

- Foraging bees collect pollen and nectar to feed their young and themselves. They are NOT looking for someone to sting!
- Teach children to STAY BACK and not disturb bee or wasp nests.
- You are safe watching bees as they fly from flower to flower.
- Honey bees and some bumble bees are defensive within 10 or 20 feet of their nests.
- Remember, stay back and share the space!

Rosemary



Beardtongue



Purple Coneflower



Common Sunflower



The **North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC)** is a collaborative body of over 140 organizations that work for the protection of pollinators across Mexico, Canada and the United States. The **NAPPC Forage and Nutrition Task Force** produced this brochure. Feedback is welcome. For more information please contact info@pollinator.org or 415-362-1137 or visit www.pollinator.org.