

How Can You Help Promote Bee Health?

Bees pollinate gardens and flowering landscapes. Promoting their good health is an important priority. The good news is you can help.

Bee Responsible

Governments and scientists agree bee health is a complex and long-standing concern—one that dates back to the 1800s. Research points to multiple factors affecting pollinators, including pests and parasites, microbial diseases, nutrition problems, bee management practices, and climate change.



Working Together Toward Solutions

Because bee health is a complex issue, some of the solutions for improving it are too. For example:

- 1. Parasites:** The National Stakeholders Conference on Bee Health in 2013 reported the Varroa mite, a parasite that feeds on bee larva and attaches itself to adult bees, remains the “single most detrimental pest of honey bees.” The parasite also shares viruses with bees, which are often deadly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the private sector are working to find solutions for protecting bees from the mites.
- 2. Nutrition:** The same conference noted nutrition has a major impact on individual bee and colony longevity. Bees not receiving enough nutrients appear to be easier targets for pathogens, parasites, and other stressors. This challenge may be partially solved by finding ways to create diversity in the landscape surrounding colonies, offering more resources to pollinators.

You Can Help

The challenges to bee health are being addressed by governments, scientists, industry, and the beekeeping community; however, everyone can play a role in improving bee health.

- 1.** Welcome pollinators to your neighborhood by choosing pollinator-friendly plants. Bees prefer blue, yellow, or bright white flowers that have a large landing surface and shallow shape. Also, plant a variety of flowers that bloom throughout the growing season to provide continual pollinating opportunities.



Scan the QR code with your smart phone to download a pollinator-friendly planting guide app.

- 2.** Always read and follow label instructions when using insecticides. Choosing and using the right product to solve your pest problems ensures the product is used safely and effectively and will not harm pollinators.

Speaking of Pesticides

Recently, bee health discussions have included questions about a specific class of pesticides called neonicotinoids and their impact on pollinators. It’s important to remember that neonicotinoids have been used for more than 20 years to protect trees and plants from damaging insects. The products are registered through U.S. EPA’s Reduced Risk Program for products that pose less risk to human health and our environment. Neonicotinoids protect trees and plants from damaging insects like aphids; protect homes from termites; and control fleas on pets.

It is essential you always read and follow all label instructions when using any pesticide products. Make sure to choose the right product for your problem, and apply it correctly.

To learn more about the many factors affecting bee health and how we can work together to support their long-term health, visit www.debugthemyths.com/beeresponsible.

Sources:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2.03-copy.pdf>
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/04/30/308349393/smiting-the-mite-to-save-the-bees-and-the-crops-they-pollinate>
<http://www.usda.gov/documents/ReportHoneyBeeHealth.pdf>. Page 23.
<http://www.pollinator.org/PDFs/Guides/PacificLowlandrx9FINAL.pdf>