

March 20, 2010

NRDC

Vanishing Bees

Honey bees are disappearing across the country, putting \$15 billion worth of fruits, nuts and vegetables at risk

The list of crops that simply won't grow without honey bees is a long one: Apples, cucumbers, broccoli, onions, pumpkins, carrots, avocados, almonds ... and it goes on.

Without bees to pollinate many of our favorite fruits and vegetables, the United States could lose \$15 billion worth of crops -- not to mention what it would do to your diet.



Honey bees are important pollinators for both flowers and agricultural crops.

Beekeepers first sounded the alarm about disappearing bees in 2006. Seemingly healthy bees were simply abandoning their hives en masse, never to return. Researchers call the mass disappearance Colony Collapse Disorder, and they estimate that nearly one-third of all honey bee colonies in the country have vanished.

Why are the bees leaving? Scientists studying the disorder believe a combination of factors could be making bees sick, including pesticide exposure, invasive parasitic mites, an inadequate food supply and a new virus that targets bees' immune systems. More research is essential to determine the exact cause of the bees' distress.

Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture has allotted \$20 million over the next five years for research, that amount pales in comparison with the potential loss of \$15 billion worth of crops that bees pollinate every year. And the USDA has so far failed to aggressively seek out a solution.

If we don't act now to save the honey bee, it might be too late. And no honey bees will mean no more of your favorite fruits and vegetables.

Here's a list of what bees pollinate:

Take Action Now!

URGE USDA TO ACT

Tell the Department of Agriculture to act now to save bees and crops.

▶ TAKE ACTION NOW!

Learn more about Colony Collapse Disorder in this video produced for *OnEarth* magazine.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- [Make your garden bee-safe](#)
- [Read "The Vanishing" in *OnEarth* magazine](#)

Fruits and Nuts

- Almonds
- Apples
- Apricots
- Avocados
- Blueberries
- Boysenberries
- Cherries
- Citrus
- Cranberries
- Grapes
- Kiwifruit
- Loganberries
- Macadamia nuts
- Nectarines
- Olives
- Peaches
- Pears
- Plums/Prunes
- Raspberries
- Strawberries

Vegetables

- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cucumbers
- Cantaloupe
- Honeydew
- Onions
- Pumpkins
- Squash
- Watermelons

Field Crops

- Alfalfa Hay
- Alfalfa Seed
- Cotton Lint
- Cotton Seed
- Legume Seed
- Peanuts
- Rapeseed
- Soybeans
- Sugar Beets
- Sunflowers

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