

JUST BEE

WHY ARE BEES IMPORTANT?

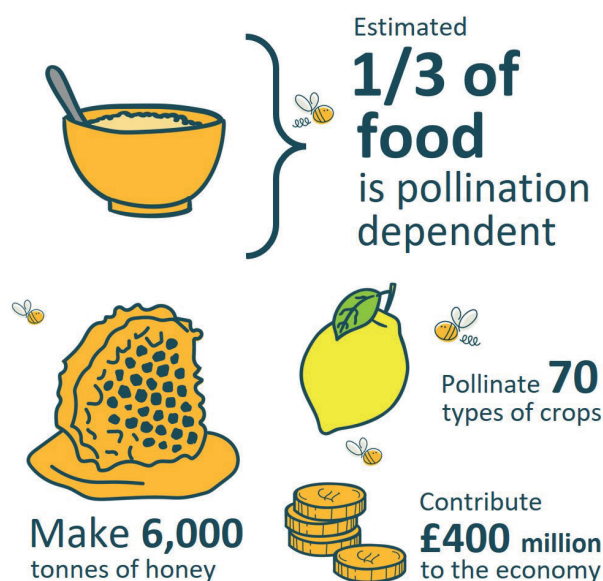
We should be in no doubt that bees are some of the hardest working and important creatures on the planet. We owe a lot to this amazing, yet still often under-appreciated, little insect. And it's not just about the honey they make!

In the UK there are around 270 different species of bee, and they can be split up into 3 broad types. There are around 245 wild or solitary bees, 24 bumble bees and there is only 1 honey bee!

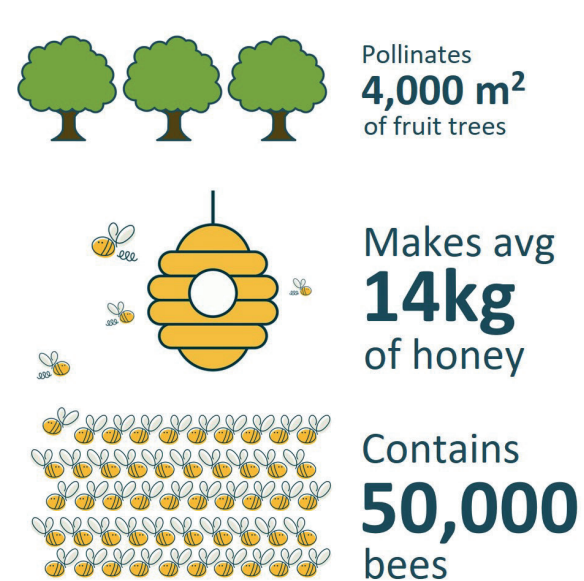
Bees (and other insects) are vital in their work as pollinators. Pollination is the word we use for how plants reproduce. Simply put, pollination is when the male part of the flower (called the stamen) meets the female part of another flower (the pistil).

While some plants can pollinate themselves or rely on the wind to do it, many plants rely on animals and insects to assist with this pollination process and bees are an especially important part of that process.

A bees (in the UK):



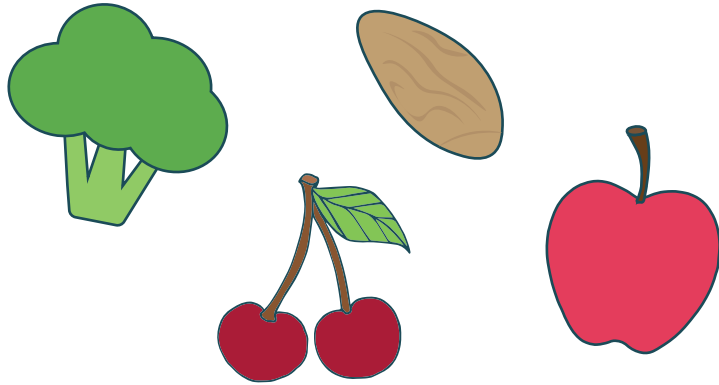
A colony:



Our own lives and the world as a whole would be a very different place if bees no longer existed. Bees are responsible for pollinating almost a third of all the food we eat and 20% of all the plants in the world.

If bees stopped pollinating our agricultural goods, we would be in serious danger of losing all production of crops such as:

- broccoli,
- asparagus,
- cucumbers,
- pumpkins,
- blueberries,
- watermelons,
- almonds,
- apples,
- cranberries,
- and cherries; to name just a small fraction!



Even just a reduction in bee numbers could cause these products to become rare and therefore more expensive. It's not an exaggeration to say that we rely on the pollination that bees do to sustain the food system of today. In the UK alone it would cost millions of pounds a year to hire people to do the work bees do pollinating our crops.

And it's not only food crops that rely on bee pollination either. Crops like cotton, that many of our clothes are made from, are also pollinated by bees. So without bees, we'd also have no cotton clothes! Albert Einstein said: "If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth then man would only have 4 years left to live. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man!"

HOW CAN WE HELP SAVE THE BEES?

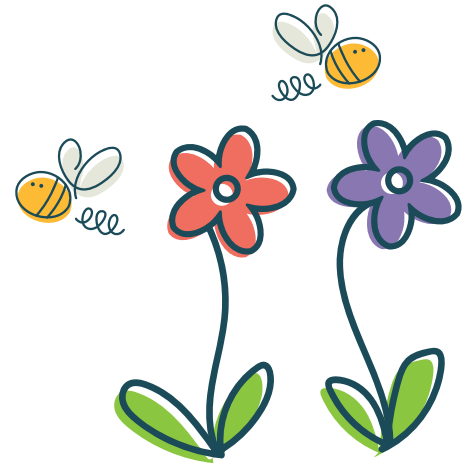
Here are some simple things we can all do to help Save the Bees!

1. Plant some bee-friendly flowers

Creating a bee friendly wildflower garden can be extremely fun, easy and rewarding. It can encompass your whole garden, just a small area, a tub on a patio or a hanging basket. We can all do something even if we don't have a garden, you could even start a mini bee garden in one of our



empty honey pots! Wildflower seeds are extremely easy to grow and create the perfect environment for bees to both take shelter and collect nectar and pollen. Having a variety of flowers is the key to having a successful bee garden. This will ensure a varied menu for visiting bees and you will see different plants flowering at different times during the summer. You can get some FREE bee-friendly flowers from our website: www.justbeehoney.co.uk/seeds



2. Let your grass grow a little longer!

If you have a garden then letting your grass grow longer before cutting can double lawn flower production. A lawn full of daisies and buttercups can look just as beautiful as shortly cropped grass and seeds are inexpensive and easily available. Kids will love making daisy-chains in the summer! You can even let your grass grow so it develops its own flower heads, which can happen in just a few weeks. If you really want a short lawn then you could leave a small space to create a more bee-friendly area.



3. Avoid using pesticides and insecticides

We can also avoid using pesticides and insecticides as it will make a difference. If we want our gardens to be bee-friendly, then we need to make them as natural as possible. Chemicals, pesticides and weedkillers can be really dangerous to our buzzy friends and in almost all cases are not needed in our gardens. Farmers and commercial growers use them to make sure they get the maximum profit and yields from crops. We are not in that position and there is almost always a less harmful alternative, even if that does mean getting on our knees and doing a little weeding from time to time!



4. Build a bee-hotel!

Two solitary bees you'll often find in the garden are the Red Mason Bee and the Leaf-cutting Bee and they are prolific pollinators. Recent research suggests that they can pollinate up to 120 times more than honey bees – so it's a great idea to help them thrive!



One way you can help these bees is to put up a 'bee hotel' in your garden.

These are safe little spaces for them to nest and you can either buy one or create your own. The good news is that it is much easier (and cheaper) than you might think to make a bee hotel and it involves upcycling – so it's great for the environment in more ways than one!

For a simple step by step guide on how to build a bee hotel, please go to: www.justbeehoney.co.uk/bee-hotel

5. Join other campaigns

Getting involved in campaigns like World Bee Day (20th May) really does help! Not only because it involves doing practical things like planting seeds. But also because it helps to educate people on the issues and galvanise support for the cause. You might be interested in the following organisations which also have campaigns to help bees:

Just Bee Honey Blogs: <https://justbeehoney.co.uk/save-the-bees>

World Bee Day: <https://www.worldbeeday.org/en/>

Bumblebee Conservation Trust: <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/>

Greenpeace: <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/challenges/bees/>

Friends of the Earth: <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/bees>

The Bee Friendly Trust: <https://beefriendlytrust.org/>

British Beekeepers Association: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/>

