

Honeybees

In keeping with the second part of my theme: “Promote our Pledge, Protect our Pollinators,” this article is about Honeybees.

Within the past few years, beekeepers reported there is a 3 million decline in honeybee colonies. This was known as Colony Collapse Disorder when the bees left their hives and did not return. As important as bees are to our food sources, no one knew why this was taking place. Several feasible causes were identified, but so far, there is no “best” answer.

If you are thinking of raising honeybees, Jessica Edgson wrote an interesting article in February 2022, titled, “Top 10 Facts About Bees to Get You Started.”

This is what she wrote:

- There are 3 types of bees in a colony: the queen, the workers, and the drones.
- Bees have an exceptional sense of smell.
- Researchers discovered a bee fossil that is 100 million years old.
- Bees have 5 eyes.
- Bees use the sun to help them navigate.
- Drone bees can not hurt you because they don’t have a stinger.
- A queen bee lays 1 egg in 43 seconds.
- A hive could have more than 1 queen.
- *Bombus dahlbomii* are the world’s largest bumblebees.
- Bumblebees build their homes near the ground.

Top 5 Ways to Save the Bees, Posted by Ann Garaygay in August 2021:

- Adopt a bee from Project Honeybees. They sell bee-themed merchandise which brings awareness and money for honeybee research.
- Avoid using non-stick pans as they release toxic chemicals into the air when heated. Honeybees inhale the air before eventually settling on plants that pollinators visit for food or water. It’s been shown that these chemicals can affect the bee’s ability to navigate back home, make new queens, or produce enough worker bees for their hive. Also, these chemicals have been linked to declines in honeybee populations and other pollinators like bumblebees and butterflies.
- Work to reduce your pesticide use. Pesticides can be harmful to bees, other pollinators, and the environment. Using a natural approach to reducing pests in our gardens will help save bee populations and promote biodiversity among garden plants. Good alternatives for pest control include handpicking insects and their eggs from leaves, late-summer plantings of fragrant herbs such as thyme and rosemary, and ladybugs (they are natural predators for aphids) or using nematodes to control soil-inhabiting pests.
- Plant a bee friendly garden using flowers and herbs to encourage honeybee flourishing. And wildflowers are the perfect food for bees’ pollination. Bees are attracted to clover, mints, lavender, asters, and sunflowers.
- Become a beekeeper. As the honeybee population declines, we need more “beekeepers.” It is inexpensive! You will need a glass jar, a screw-top lid, and sugar water to feed your new bees.

Lastly, you'll need bees! Contact a local beekeeper to purchase a colony of bees and learn how to keep bees sustainably and responsibly.

Cheryl Drumheller
OSFGC President 2021-2023

For more information about bees and other pollinator species check out the OSU Extension service website. [Search OSU Extension | OSU Extension Service \(oregonstate.edu\)](#)