

What is so important about bees?

Bees play a vital role in nature and in the production of many of our most valued foods. They have co-evolved with flowering plants and so are perfectly adapted to live on their nectar and provide a pollination service in return.

Without bees, we would find it difficult or impossible to grow a wide range of crops.

What is special about the honeybee?

Honeybees are unique in that they over-winter in colonies rather than singly, as do most bee species. They rapidly grow in numbers in the spring, which means that by the time early-flowering crops appear, there are many thousands of them per colony available for pollination. This makes them particularly important to fruit growers and to growers of seed-bearing crops, such as almonds, mustard, oilseed rape and sunflowers.

Why are people saying that bees are in danger?

Bees of all species are under threat from agricultural insecticides, pollution and urbanization.

Even apparently 'green' spaces, such as golf courses and public parks, are often treated with insecticides that are lethal to bees.

Parasitic mites and viruses have taken advantage of their weakened state to cause them additional stress. Intensive beekeeping methods may have also contributed to their problems, which is why the growing 'natural beekeeping' movement is developing better ways to keep bees without chemicals or medications.



What is Friends of the Bees?

It is a charity founded to conserve and protect bees, to educate people about bees and to research and promote more natural beekeeping methods.

What does Friends of the Bees do?

- we aim to work with other groups to help restore the natural balance between honeybees and other insect pollinators.
- we are establishing sites for small teaching apiaries, where people can learn about bees and natural beekeeping
- we publish educational material about bees and natural beekeeping
- we raise money for research into beekeeping and bee conservation

What can I do to help?

- copy and distribute this leaflet – you can download it from our web site or photocopy as required
- read, copy and distribute any of the free material on our web site
- **make a donation** to help us do more (see web site)

www.friendsofthebees.org