

# 6 Ways to Help Honey Bees

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Did you know that honey bees are responsible for 1 in every 3 bites of food we eat? That's right! They're the world's busiest pollinators, with a really big job to do. Honey bees pollinate more than 100 types of crops in the U.S., help maintain the diversity of plant life and ultimately, play a crucial role in our ecosystem.

Unfortunately, it's getting tougher for honey bees to survive. Their population is dwindling due to loss of habitat, pesticide and insecticide use, and parasites.

Humans benefit greatly from a healthy honey bee population. Because the future of food depends on healthy pollinators, it's time for everyone — even the kids! — to make honey bees a priority.



## Q: Why are bees Important?

Honey bees are vital to our supply of healthy foods. Honey bees are pollinators, which means they travel from plant to plant to collect and deposit pollen – which makes it possible for many flowers, fruits and vegetables to reproduce. Bees also pollinate the clover and alfalfa that cows eat. In fact, one in every three bites of food you eat depends on pollination, either directly or indirectly. So, if these hardworking bees and other pollinators disappear, many of our favorite foods like apples, almonds, strawberries and tomatoes will be greatly affected.

## Q: Why are bee populations declining?

A: There has been a noticeable and steady decline in the bee population, which scientists and beekeepers believe may be caused by a combination of factors, including parasites, loss of habitat and increased exposure to pesticides and insecticides. Although the problem is complex, it's not too late to help preserve pollinators — and secure the future of food.

## Q: What can we do to help honey bee populations?

A: Plenty! Here are six simple ways you can help these vitally important insects thrive — right in your own backyard.

1. **Go wild.** Let part of your lawn grow without mowing. Bees love flowering weeds and grasses.
2. **Grow native plants.** A patch of wildflowers will add color and a nectar source for bees. Cultivate a landscape with diverse colors, shapes, sizes and bloom times. Don't have a yard? Grow pollinator-friendly plants in an outdoor space in your city. (*Bzzt!* Seed flings are perfect for tossing into abandoned lots or other urban greenspaces. Want to learn how to make one? [Download our Inside the Buzz At-Home Guide](#) to find out how.)
3. **Create a bee “pond.”** Bees can't swim or get their wings wet, but they need water, too! Try filling a shallow pie pan with pebbles and water, so bees have somewhere to land and sip some H<sub>2</sub>O. Bonus: no cleaning required! Bees actually love “dirty” water, which is why they love the water that gathers in saucers under flower pots.
4. **Ditch the toxic stuff.** Some of the products we use on plants and veggies hurt bees and other pollinators. Try a sprinkling of cayenne pepper around pestered plants. Sometimes the best method is to pick unwanted bugs right off!
5. **Buy local, organic produce.** Support farmers who are doing their best to support bees. Anytime you choose organic food, you know pesticides that can harm our pollinators were not used. *Bee* on the lookout for a [rainbow of veggies and fruits](#), which contain nutrients that can help our bodies stay healthy — all brought to you by bees! And don't forget to buy local honey! You'll help support a thriving local honey bee ecology, which means that more food can be grown locally.
6. **Please don't swat!** Honey bees very rarely sting, but they can be curious creatures. If a honeybee approaches you, be still as she checks to see if you have any nectar. Once she knows you're not a flower, she'll buzz along. While other kinds of insects can sting, like wasps and yellow jackets, they look very different from honeybees. Learn how to recognize honeybees so you'll know they mean no harm. Once you know what a honeybee looks like, help your friends learn, too!

BONUS: get kids buzzing! Spark their curiosity and awareness of pollinators' importance through family-friendly activities [on our website](#), including projects, videos, coloring sheets and more. Check out crafts like building a pollinator puppet or bee colony, reading guides with follow-up activities and recipes, too.

### **Q. How Can We Engage Our Communities?**

A: Check out [The Bee Grant program](#), which allows for schools and nonprofit organizations to receive support for educational beehives. Through the grant, children can observe bees up close and learn about the critical role these pollinators play in our food system and ecosystem as a whole.

For this grant, we partner with [The Bee Cause Project](#), a nonprofit organization that empowers students, teachers and community members to experience the wonder, ingenuity, beauty and power of the honey bee while developing STEAM skills.

To date, The Bee Grant program has provided hives for more than 500 schools, but there are thousands more students waiting for the same opportunity.

During National Pollinator Month in June, the [#GiveBeesAChance campaign](#) aims to raise funds to provide new beehives to schools and nonprofits across the U.S. and Canada. Donate to the [#GivesBeesAChance](#) campaign and help bring educational beehives to more schools, so more kids can learn about the vital role pollinators play in our ecosystem.

Story by  
[Whole Kids Foundation](#)

### **Next Up:**

Bees

### **[10 Buzzworthy Bee Movies and Videos](#)**

There's so much to learn about our pollinator heroes! Check out these bee movies and videos and watch with parents, kids, friends and neighbors!



### **Grow With Us**

Stay up to date on our grant programs and how our favorite schools and organizations are doing!

<https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/blog/6-simple-ways-your-family-can-protect-honey-bees>