

Bee Happy Family Celebration



L'shana Tova- Happy Jewish New Year! Rosh Hashanah is called the “Birthday of the World!” It’s a perfect time to celebrate creation and the precious gift of nature. God asks us to “tend and till” and to be stewards- good caretakers- of this earth. That means we have a responsibility to maintaining its health, biodiversity, animals, natural resources and landscapes...

for ourselves and for all living creatures!



It takes more than soil, water, and sunshine to make the world green. At least 30% of the world’s crops and 90% of all plants require cross-pollination to spread and thrive. The insects, birds, and bats—collectively known as **pollinators**—are crucial to the health of Earth’s various ecosystems. Without them, much of the farmed and wild flora that humans and other animals depend on for food, air, and shelter would die off, and that, suffice it to say, would not be good for anyone.

Unfortunately, bee populations around the world are in decline due to habitat loss. Climate change causes some flowers to bloom earlier or later than usual, leaving bees with fewer food sources at the start of the season. Bees suffer habitat loss from development, and the lack of bee-friendly flowers. Some colonies collapse when plants are treated with pesticides, or from harmful parasites like mites.



The good news is there are ways we can help. Planting a bee-friendly garden leads to healthy and vibrant plants and ensures that bees continue to play their critical role in our ecosystem.

Here are five reasons bees are important to the environment.

5. Pollination

If you love apples, oranges, lemons, melons, cranberries, asparagus, or broccoli, you should tip your hat to our fuzzy, insect friends. To germinate, these plants require the transfer of pollen from the male part of the flower (the anther) to the female part (the stigma). As bees move from flower to flower in search of nectar, they leave behind grains of pollen on the sticky surface, allowing plants to grow and produce food. Bees earn their reputation as busy workers by pollinating billions of plants each year, including millions of agricultural crops. In fact, pollinators like bees play a key role in one out of every three bites of food we eat. Without them, many plants we rely on for food would die off.

4. Wild Plant Growth

It's not just farm-grown fruits and vegetables that rely on pollinators to thrive. Many species of wild plants depend on insect pollinators as well. Bees are responsible for the production of many seeds, nuts, berries, and fruit, which serve as a vital food source for wild animals.

3. Food Source

Bees produce honey to feed their colonies during the cold winter months. Humans have harvested honey for thousands of years, but critters like birds, racoons, opossums, and insects raid beehives for a taste of nutritious honey (and bee larvae)! Bees themselves are also a part of the food chain. At least 24 species of bird, including the blackbird, ruby-throated hummingbird, and starling, prey on bees. Many spiders and insects, like dragonflies and praying mantises, eat bees as well.

2. Wildlife Habitats

Bees are known for their elaborate hives, but they also help build homes for millions of other insects and animals. Their role as pollinators is vital in the growth of tropical forests, savannah woodlands, and temperate deciduous forests. Many tree species, like willows and poplars, couldn't grow without pollinators like bees. Even your own garden serves as a home for hundreds of tiny creatures, from birds and squirrels to thousands of tiny insects. If bees disappeared, the animals that depend on these plants for survival would vanish as well.

1. Biodiversity

As pollinators, bees play a part in every aspect of the ecosystem. They support the growth of trees, flowers, and other plants, which serve as food and shelter for creatures large and small. Bees contribute to complex, interconnected ecosystems that allow a diverse number of different species to co-exist.

The good news is you can help by creating more of the habitat they need to survive! All you have to do is plant more of the wildflowers and other native plants that pollinators love to pollinate. One of the easiest and most fun ways to do this is by making and distributing seed balls—little balls of clay, soil, and seeds that can be tossed anywhere where flowers are likely to grow.

Bee-cause its' Smart to know:

- Honeybees and Bumblebees are 2 of 20,000 species of bees!
- Bumblebees are good at extracting pollen from different flowers and even specialize in certain species. They are adept at cross-pollination, which is important for fruit trees.
- Honeybees are good communicators: they perform a dance to let their others know where good supplies of pollen can be found! While this is good for their colony and honey production, it's not great for pollination. While honeybees will rush off to mine a certain pollen source, bumblebees will stay around, patiently working an extended area until it is fully pollinated.
- Honeybees can only sting once before dying. Bumblebees can sting multiple times, but they do not form swarms like honeybees and they only sting when truly provoked.
- You can encourage bees to your yard by planting wildflowers, helping to reverse habitat loss.
- Blue Ridge Honey, began in the 1980s here in Ventura. They have 1,600 colonies and take their bees to pollinate orchards of Ventura county and Ojai Valley growers.