

Understanding Our Environment

How To “Bee” Active Helping Hives Survive

(NAPSA)—The food producer responsible for one of every three bites the average American eats is in crisis, and more than half of Americans are not even aware there is a problem. Over the past several winters, more than 25 percent of the honey bee population in the United States has vanished. Everything from poor nutrition to invasive mites to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)—a phenomenon where bees from a colony abruptly disappear, leaving no trace—is affecting the bee population. This disappearance has scientists stumped and has the potential to affect many of our favorite fruits, berries, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

A world without the hardworking honey bee is a world without tasty pears, luscious raspberries and crunchy nuts. In fact, honey bees are responsible for the pollination of more than 100 crops, providing 80 percent of the country’s pollination services. Without the help of honey bees in crop pollination, an estimated \$15 billion in U.S. agriculture is in jeopardy affecting both U.S. and international food supplies.

The plight of the honey bee affects us all. Here are some small steps you can take to help save these petite pollinators:

- Create a bee-friendly garden—See the five simple tips to learn more.
- Voice your concerns and go to www.helpthehoneybees.com.
- Support Häagen-Dazs Brand ice cream products—a portion of the proceeds of the sale of all honey bee-affected flavors and new Vanilla Honey Bee ice cream will go toward funding sustainable pol-



Photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey, Department of Entomology, University of California, Davis

The latest buzz is that we need bees to pollinate more than 100 crops.

lination and CCD research at UC Davis and Penn State.

Five simple tips to create a bee-friendly garden

1. Choose garden plants and flowers that are pollinator-friendly. This includes most plants in the rose, mint, pea and aster families.
2. Select flowers that have a single layer of flower petals, such as a classic daisy.
3. Add non-native plants to your garden to create diversity. Plus, many non-native varieties are excellent, attractive and vigorous plants that provide food for bees and pollinators.
4. Look for flowers that provide food all season. Plant some early flowering plants, along with mid- and late-season flowers. Late-season flowers like goldenrod and aster are especially important.
5. Provide a good environment. Limit, or better still, eliminate the use of pesticides, particularly on attractive plants with open flowers.