PLANTS & HERBS

Bees Voted To Be The Most Important Living Beings On Earth

By bestfolkmedicine · 26/07/2019 · 3 min read



Unfortunately, the decline in bee population in the past decade has been concerning environments and governments worldwide. This doesn't come as a surprise if we take into account these species' importance for the human wellbeing and the ecosystems. Many refer to them as the most invaluable species on the planet and we can't agree more.

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According to The Guardian, there are 25,000 different bee species in the world and only 4 of these species make honey. However, a USDA Forest Service and Pollinator Partnership publication points out that there are thousands of other types, from carpenter to bumble bees.

In the US alone, there are 4,000 species.

Why Are Bees so Invaluable?

Bees are known to forage and consume nectar and pollen from flowers. During the foraging for nectar, they pollinate the flowers. When a bee lands on a flower and pulls out its nectar, their hairs and legs are covered with pollen produced by anthers.

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Bees are known to visit same kind flowers and when they go to the next bloom, the pollen is brushed on the stigma, resulting in cross-pollination. This is crucial for the formation of viable seeds, according to the Michigan State University.

Of course, both wind and water are major pollinators; however, up to 80 percent of plants depend on animals for pollination. The main pollinators are insects, including bees.

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Native and honey bees were found to be responsible for 61 percent of pollination whereas only 39 percent was done by other insects like butterflies, flies, and wasps.

This being said, bees are crucial pollinators which makes them invaluable to our economy and our ecosystems.

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The Supply of Food & Economic Advantage of Bees

The global economic advantage from bee pollination varies, but, according to a report by Green Peace, it's approximately $280 billion dollars.

Bees and insects are known to pollinate 84 percent of crops, 400 veggie species, nuts, and fruits we regularly eat. They also pollinate 1/3 of all the food we consume.

And, wild bees are as crucial as honeybees and their contribution to crop yields was $3,251 per hectare in comparison to $2,913 from commercial bees.

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Only 2 percent of wild bees pollinated crops although they did approximately 80 percent of these crop visits.

It's important to note that a lot of crops don't need pollination for their produce such as hemp or cotton; however, they need bees to produce seeds. Therefore, they're also dependent on bees.

Bee Pollination Doesn't Stop Here

In addition to crops, bees also pollinate pastures and crops like clover and beans for dairy and cattle. Pollination is certainly pivotal to keep sustainable seed levels for the generations to come and if the bees continue declining, plants will start to rely on self-pollination.

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Although self-pollination is a characteristics of a lot of plants, it produces unhealthy offspring and non-diverse.

Why Are Bee Populations Declining?

Because of pesticide use, virus, habitat loss, and pesticides, the population of honey and wild bees has been reducing. According to The Guardian, in the US, 40 percent of the colonies die annually.

Unfortunately, replacing bees and facing their disappearance is very difficult and poses a direct threat to food security, as well as economic loss.

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This being said, it's vital to take the necessary measures to put an end to their habitat decline, boost organic farming, and prevent them from disappearing entirely.

Sources:

THE GUARDIAN

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ONE GREEN PLANET

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