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HELP THE HONEYBEES!

Honeybees help humans by providing us with tasty honey, useful wax, and critical pollination services. Scientists continue to discover new ways these marvelous creatures help mankind. Here are a few things you can do to return the favor!

BEE EDUCATED!

Learn to recognize the honeybee and differentiate her from the more aggressive wasp, yellow jacket or hornet. Never kill a honeybee.

Learn to recognize a honeybee swarm and to protect them. Inform others not to kill the bees and call a local beekeeper who will safely remove them. Most local police departments keep a "swarm call" list and can help you find a beekeeper.

Go to your local library and find books to read about honeybee biology and behavior, beekeeping, cooking with honey and more.

BEE A GARDENER!

Plant food for you, and for the bees! Many popular garden crops, trees and bedding flowers are attractive to honeybees, including melons, cucumbers, strawberries, squash, daffodils, crocus, peppermint, apples and sage. Ask for suggestions at your local nursery.

Avoid pesticide and herbicide use, especially during bloom time. And remember that the plant you are spraying may not be the only thing getting dosed. Wind or overspray can carry the chemical to neighboring plants and weeds. Many weeds are bee food, so if you spray toxic chemicals on them, the bees will carry that poison back to their hive. Find alternate ways to kill weeds, like white vinegar, salt or boiling water or even better, let the weeds bloom!

BEE LAZY!

Let the last of the broccoli and other veggie plants bolt, rather than harvesting those last little tiny bits. The bees will come and visit and find a healthy snack!

Let the dandelions bloom. Instead of spraying or digging or fighting against the dandelions, welcome their cheery yellow heads to your yard, and know you are feeding the bees an important source of pollen and nectar.

BEE A SMART CONSUMER!

Buy organic fruits and vegetables and buy more of them. Not only will you be doing yourself a favor, you'll be helping to support farmers who practice bee-friendly growing techniques.

Buy local honey, and buy more of it. Look for beekeepers at your local farmers market and ask them how they manage their hives. Importing honey is big business and big money. Several importers have been caught in recent years bringing in honey diluted with sugar water or corn syrup, and even honey that is adulterated with dangerous antibiotics that have been outlawed for use in this country.

BEE A CONSERVATIONIST

Preserve honeybee habitat and food supplies, like bands of goldenrod along a fencerow or an old hollow snag that might make a good home for honeybee swarm.

BEE A POLITICAL ACTIVIST

Support legislation that protects honeybees and beekeepers.

Encourage your representatives to do the same.

BEE A BEEKEEPER

The best thing you can possibly do for honeybees to provide them a home in your own backyard! Learn sound beekeeping techniques to keep your hives safe and clean.

Join a local beekeeping group and find a mentor to teach you the ropes!

Buy your bees from local suppliers to get stock best adapted to your area.

BEE –FRIEND A BEEKEEPER

If you aren't quite ready to make the leap into keeping bees yourself, try to meet a beekeeper who you can call in the event you see a swarm or want to buy some local honey. It's nice to have someone you can call for bee-emergencies!

Have a nice location for bees? Consider allowing a beekeeper to put hives on your property. You will benefit from the pollination services, enjoy watching the bees and perhaps even get a little honey out of the deal. Make sure to set clear expectations up front, so there no surprises down the road.