



Amma's Message on World Bee Day - 20 May



Dear sweet children,

The Importance of Bees

As spiritual aspirants we need to learn and appreciate nature in all its aspects, even the most minute ones. Even a creature like the bee plays a vital role in our lives. We need to thus develop a deep understanding and love for all the creations that the Divine has bestowed upon us to not just enrich our lives but actually make our existence possible. We should not be ignorant but awake to all of life around us. The bee is one such insect.

The United Nations five years ago instituted the World Bee Day to make us aware how important it is for not just us biodiversity on this globe.

For centuries bees are among the hardest working creatures on the planet. They are known to have benefited people, plants and the environment. By carrying pollen from one flower to another, bees and other pollinators enable not only the production of an abundance of fruits, nuts and seeds, but also more variety and better quality, contributing to food security and nutrition.

Pollinators, such as bees, birds and bats, affect 35 percent of the world's crop production, increasing outputs of 87 of the leading food crops worldwide, plus many plant-derived medicines. Three out of four crops across the globe producing fruits or seeds for human use as food depend, at least in part, on pollinators. For centuries bees, among the hardest working creatures on the planet, have benefited people, plants and the environment. By carrying pollen from one flower to another, bees and other pollinators enable not only the production of an abundance of fruits, nuts and seeds, but also more variety and better quality, contributing to food security and nutrition.

Learn More about Bees and Conquer Fear!

By researching these creatures, we will see that bees are not generally dangerous. Not all bees sting and the ones that do, do it for a reason. Stinging and swarming are self-defense mechanisms. They do not intentionally hunt humans. By better understanding how to respect them, we can avoid bad encounters and learn to live peacefully with these necessary creatures. And help spread the word: You can be an advocate for bees!

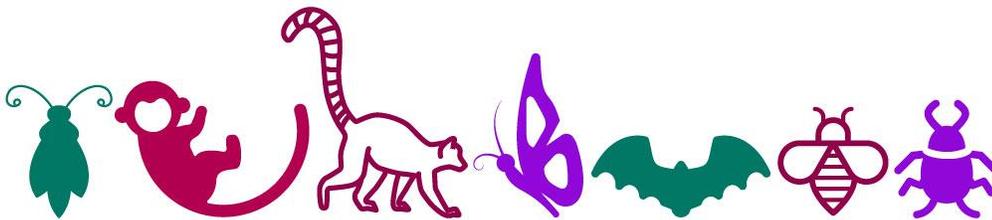
It is no wonder that all the major world religions have sacred passages about bees. They have been and still are vital to food and life as we know it. Through the 2018-2030 plan of action of the International Pollinators Initiative, FAO and the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat in consultation with the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and other partners, will promote coordinated action worldwide to safeguard wild and managed pollinators and promote the sustainable use of pollination services, which is recognized as vital for agriculture and healthy ecosystems.

These actions support agriculture that is more diverse and less dependent on toxic chemicals. Helping keep our pollinators safe supports our food production, the incomes of farmers and the wider environment. Help us spread the buzz on World Bee Day.

Bee engaged: build Back Better for Bees

The fourth observance of World Bee Day will be celebrated under the theme “Bee engaged – Build Back Better for Bees”. This calls for global cooperation and solidarity to counter the threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to food security and agricultural livelihoods alongside prioritizing environmental regeneration and pollinator protection. It will be an occasion to raise awareness of how everyone can make a difference to support, restore and enhance the role of pollinator.

Do you know all the different pollinators?



We need to act now

Bees are under threat. Present species extinction rates are 100 to 1,000 times higher than normal due to human impacts. Close to 35 percent of invertebrate pollinators, particularly bees and butterflies, and about 17 percent of vertebrate pollinators, such as bats, face extinction globally.

If this trend continues, nutritious crops, such as fruits, nuts and many vegetable crops will be substituted increasingly by staple crops like rice, corn and potatoes, eventually resulting in an imbalanced diet.

Intensive farming practices, land-use change, mono-cropping, pesticides and higher temperatures associated with climate change all pose problems for bee populations and, by extension, the quality of food we grow.

Recognizing the dimensions of the pollination crisis and its links to biodiversity and human livelihoods, the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) has made the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators a priority. In 2000, the International Pollinator Initiative (IPI) was established ([COP decision V/5, section II](#)) at the Fifth Conference of Parties (COP V) as a cross-cutting initiative to promote the sustainable use of pollinators in agriculture and related ecosystems. Its main goals are monitoring pollinators decline, addressing the lack of taxonomic information on pollinators, assessing the economic value of pollination and the economic impact of the decline of pollination services and protect pollinator diversity.

Along with coordinating the International Pollinator Initiative (IPI), the FAO also provides technical assistance to countries on issues ranging from queen breeding to artificial insemination to sustainable solutions for honey production and export marketing.

How can we do more?

Individually by:

- Planting a diverse set of native plants, which flower at different times of the year;
- Buying raw honey from local farmers;
- Buying products from sustainable agricultural practices;
- Avoiding pesticides, fungicides or herbicides in our gardens;
- Protecting wild bee colonies when possible;
- Sponsoring a hive;
- Making a bee water fountain by leaving a water bowl outside;
- Helping sustaining forest ecosystems;
- Raising awareness around us by sharing this information within our communities and networks; the decline of bees affects us all!

As beekeepers, or farmers by:

- Reducing, or changing the usage of pesticides;
- Diversifying crops as much as possible, and/or planting attractive crops around the field;
- Creating hedgerows.

As governments and decision-makers by:

- Strengthening the participation of local communities in decision-making, in particular that of indigenous people, who know and respect ecosystems and biodiversity;
- Enforcing strategic measures, including monetary incentives to help change;
- Increasing collaboration between national and international organizations, organizations and academic and research networks to monitor and evaluate pollination services.

[More tips on how to help bees and other pollinators](#)

Learn more:

- [The power of pollinators: why more bees mean better food](#)
- [Spotlight: Seven bee-friendly fruits and veggies](#)
- [On ecosystems and the services they provide – Let's talk facts](#)
- [Bees and their role in forest livelihoods](#)