

Pollinator Facts

USDA agencies play a vital role in ensuring our pollinators thrive and survive. Our efforts focus on pollinator health, crop production, and conservation. These efforts ensure we have a variety of fruits, nuts, and vegetables needed to support a healthy diet.

- Bees and other pollinators play a critical role in our food production system.
- More than 100 U.S. grown crops rely on pollinators. The added revenue to crop production from pollinators is valued at \$18 billion.
- Honey bees are America's primary commercial pollinator, although there are over 4,000 types of bees in the United States.
- Today, there are about 2.8 million U.S. honey bee hives.
- Major U.S. pollinated crops include almonds, non-citrus fruit trees, berries, melons, and squash.
- The total annual value of U.S. honey bee products and services sold is approximately \$700 million.

The Buzz on Honey Bees:

- Honey bee colonies are typically made up of one reproductive queen, sexually undeveloped female workers, and male drones.
- The queen can live up to five years. Her main job is to lay eggs, and on average she lays 1,000 to 2,000 eggs per day—and potentially more than a million eggs in her lifetime!
- The queen produces an important pheromone that unites the colony.
- Worker bees typically live around six weeks; however, in the winter their biology changes allowing them to live up to six months.
- All workers are female and have assigned jobs, such as cleaning, caring for their young and guarding the hive.
- The most difficult and dangerous task worker bees undertake is collecting nectar, pollen, and other resources for the colony.
- Honey bee colonies typically consist of 30,000 to 80,000 workers in summer months.
- When the honey bee colony becomes too large, it will make a second queen and the colony will split into two. Part of the colony will leave the hive in search of another home, which is called swarming. Swarms are typically docile as they have no home to protect.

Get the USDA Buzz on Pollinators

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