

Foster Beelief



National Honeybee Day

Sustainability Workbook

FREE interactive
workbook on
honeybee habitats
and sustainability

#BEELIEVER

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FOSTERBEELIEF.ORG



About Us

Many are not aware of the significance of the honeybees as it relates to our environmental and economic sustainability. We educate the public on the importance of the honeybees and give them resources to get involved.

Foster Beelief is an HBCU student founded honeybee charity based in Savannah, Georgia. The goal of our organization is to build educational honeybee apiaries (collection of hives) and adjoining gardens throughout communities and on the grounds of higher education institutions. We also aim to enhance the lives of foster children in the U.S.A. by sending them care packages and integrating them into the environmental justice community.

Students and community members will have the opportunity to become members and beekeepers through Foster Beelief and learn how hives work and how to care for them, as well as the types of native plants that bees help to pollinate and how to plant and care for them.

Ultimately, Foster Beelief aims to establish beehives and gardens on every HBCU campus and across the world to help to fuel the honeybee population. Foster Beelief engages in interdisciplinary research to further investigate Colony Collapse Disorder, other risks for honeybees, and potential solutions for the honeybee population.

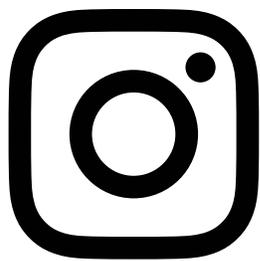
Foster Beelief also engages in educational initiatives and advocacy to spread awareness about the factors that contribute to the demise of the honeybees and provide resources for others to help get them involved.

Foster Beelief aims to promote sustainability through the education of the at-risk honeybee population, increase STEM interests in minority students, increase the progression and research in all Historically Black Colleges and Universities degree programs, build stronger industry and community partnerships, and increase citizen involvement in communities.

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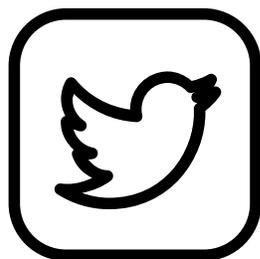
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Bee Active

By now, pretty much everyone has heard that the number of honeybees in America is dwindling to a dangerous point. What we do not know just yet is at what point will there be no going back; that is, there might come a time when we cannot do anything to help the plight of *Apis mellifera*. So, the time to act, of course, is now. Let us look briefly at what each and every one of us can do (sometimes, even, from the comfort of our own homes). We will start at home.

First of all, a very simple thing to do is to be very careful of what pesticides we use outdoors. We all know people who take great pride in their lawns (we will ignore, for the moment, the 3 trillion gallons of water we use on our lawns, and the almost 70 million pounds of pesticides used on those lawns). These people, for the most part, are well-meaning and do not realize that the herbicides and pesticides they use are killing honeybees (<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/more-sustainable-and-beautiful-alternatives-grass-lawn>). So, the first place to start would be with the question: do you need that lawn? And, if the answer is yes, then the next question would be: are a few weeds going to ruin your life? If you must treat your lawn with chemicals, be careful about when and what you apply. Granular treatments will not float along with the breeze (which can save the lives of millions of bees); further, treat the lawn at night, when bees are not active.

And, if weeds are in bloom, do not treat at all!! The type of chemical you use also is very important—and simple to control! There are plenty of insecticides for sale that do not harm pollinators. But, you can make your own with just a little effort (vinegar, actually, is a key ingredient in a very effective mosquito repellent; also, it can be used with water and a little mild dish soap to fight garden pests). A quick trip to the internet will yield many such tips. A bigger step would be to opt for a different kind of yard altogether. The easiest (and tastiest) way to start down this path is to plant edible fruits and vegetables to replace some of your lawn. Think how nice it would be to go back in time, as it were, and grow your own tomatoes and peppers; to have a couple of fruit trees that produced pears or apples...or lemons or oranges, if you live in the proper climate.

Another way to step away from the traditional lawn is to use “native or naturalized landscaping,” which replaces the usual lawn with things such as wildflowers and other things that are native to your region. Some states and municipalities even offer financial help if you are willing to take this step (<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/more-sustainable-and-beautiful-alternatives-grass-lawn>).

You might have to go out and do some weeding eventually, but think of the impact this new type of yard will have on local pollinators (and, your action just might influence some of your neighbors to do the same!). Neighbors, and communities, can be powerful weapons in the fight to save the honeybees. You can petition local governments to allow the installation of yards that promote a healthier and safer kind of life. Think of the water that can be saved; think of the run-off pollution that will not happen; think of all the “green” that will result from your taking a small step down this path. There is an Urban Habitat Assessment Tool (<https://xerces.org/earth-week-urban-hag>) that can help you, as an individual, see where your yard, your block, your town stand in making life easier for pollinators such as honeybees (and in making all of our lives a little healthier).

What if you bought plants and flowers that were designed to help the honeybees, and then found out that, Heaven forbid! your plants were killing the bees instead? Many retailers (the usual BIG chains) sell plants and seeds that have been treated with a chemical that is LETHAL to bees—neonics. You, as a consumer, must do your homework and know what on that package tells you that the seeds/plants you bought contain this poison. OR, you could pay a little more and purchase organic, safe seeds.

Here is a link to help you with this:

<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/programs/bee-protective-pollinators-and-pesticides/what-can-you-do/pollinator-friendly-seed-directory>. So, with very little effort, you now can **become** part of the solution to our dwindling honeybee problem. And, if you are willing to talk with your friends and neighbors, then you just might start a powerful engine that will drive your community to take up the mantle in the fight to preserve the wonderful little honeybee! So, please, **BEE**

ACTIVE!!!!

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Sustainability Workbook

Sustainability is defined as avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance. Write out or draw (whichever you prefer) all of the things that you do to promote sustainability each day (do you recycle, choose biodegradable materials, etc?).

What choices do you make and what things do you engage in that are **not** helping to promote sustainability (Ex: diesel cars)?

Write out or draw 3 things you can change about the choices you make that will help you to become more sustainable.

I _____ hereby promise that I will make the changes that are necessary for me to become more sustainable.

Signature

Date

Post your sustainability pact and tag us!



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