



Help minimize the loss of honeybees

In March of this year (2016), a bill to ban consumer use of certain pesticides, (neonicotinoids/neonics), was passed in both houses of the Maryland legislature. As of April 4th, it awaits Maryland's governor signing it to become law. Under the bill, as of January 1, 2018, only persons with a pesticide license will be allowed to apply neonicotinoid-containing pesticides and farmers using them for agronomic uses¹. The passage of this legislation is an important one as, in Michigan and around the world, honey bees are disappearing in record numbers².



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Entire colonies are disappearing which is known as colony collapse disorder (CCD). Although there is some disagreement as to the scientific reasons for colony collapse, pesticide use, along with mites and limiting food sources do appear to be primary contributing factors. The loss of bees is terrifying when we realize just how dependent we are on bees. About every three bites of the nutritious food we eat was a result of pollination by a bee³.

The honey bee is by far the most important species for fruit crop pollination because hives are portable and can be transported into and out of fruit plantings⁴.

Jeff Pettis, research leader for the Bee Research Lab, U.S. Dept of Agriculture says, "If you want to help bees out in your backyard, you can put in native plants that bees like, mow your grass a little higher and use fewer pesticides."

As landscape professionals, we understand the high importance bees have to our environment, our food supply and the growth and enjoyment of our plants. We can be advocates to helping turn this cycle of bee loss around. Encourage our clients and neighbors to plant bee-friendly plants and limit the use of pesticides. Some clients may be afraid of bees, but remind them that when bee-friendly plants are planted, the bees will happily do their work and have no interest in us. As an added bonus, the same plants bees like also attract hummingbirds, and butterflies.

Some of the plants and trees that bees like are: coreopsis, penstemon, lupine, lobelia, coneflower, hyssop, Joe Pye weed, aster, and hawthorn⁵.

1 <http://landscapemanagement.net/tag/bee-loss/>

2 <http://freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2015/05/07/michigan-bees-dying/70948978/>

3 <http://michiganradio.org/post/beekeepers-report-honey-bee-losses-down-problem-remains#stream/0>

4 [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/Minimizing_Pesticide_Risk_to_Bees_in_Fruit_Crops_\(E3245\).pdf](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/Minimizing_Pesticide_Risk_to_Bees_in_Fruit_Crops_(E3245).pdf)

5 <http://www.xerces.org/pollinators-great-lakes-region/>