

Biology File

Where are all the bees?



1 ... All around the world, there are reports that bees are flying away from their hives and not returning. Farmers, scientists and environmental groups are very worried and they are trying to find out why it's happening.

2 Are they so important to our environment? The short answer is, yes, it does matter and yes, they are important. Bees fly around from flower to flower, looking for nectar and pollen. They use these to produce honey, which is food for their colonies. But at the same time, the bees help to move pollen from one flower to another. This process is called 'pollination'. Pollination means that the flowers can create seeds and new flowers. Without bees, many flowers can't make seeds or fruit. In fact, bees are responsible for the pollination of one-third of all the plants which we eat. A single hive with 50,000 honeybees can pollinate 500,000 plants in one day! Imagine a world with no apples, carrots, onions, raspberries, strawberries or, of course, honey. That's a world with no bees.

3 Scientists think that there are several possible reasons, including climate change, disease and pesticides (chemicals which kill insects).

4 Beekeeping was popular two or three hundred years ago, when many families kept their own hives for honey. Now beekeeping is becoming popular again in towns and cities, as well as in the country. In fact, towns are actually good places for hives because they have gardens and parks with lots of different types of flowers. Primary schools, businesses, universities and community centres are now setting up their own hives. They enjoy the delicious honey and at the same time they know that they are helping to look after some of the most important insects on the planet.

Reading

1 Read the article quickly. Match these sentences to the correct paragraphs.

- a But it's not all bad news.
- b But does it really matter if bees disappear?
- c Bees are disappearing.
- d So, why are the bees disappearing?

2  1.14 Read the article again. Answer the questions.

1 Why are farmers, scientists and environmental groups worried about bees?

2 Why do bees fly from one flower to another?

3 What is pollination?

4 How many plants can one bee pollinate in one day?

5 What possible causes are there for the bees' disappearance?

6 Why are towns good environments for beekeeping?

3  1.15 Listen to some more information on bees. Choose the correct numbers to complete the fact file.

6.5 6 254 one-twelfth ($\frac{1}{12}$) ~~25,000~~ 24

Bee fact file

Did you know ...

- There are over **25,000** species of bee in the world.
- There are species of bee in the UK.
- A bee produces of a teaspoon of honey in its life.
- The average life of a worker bee is weeks.
- Bees fly kilometres on an average trip.
- They can fly at kilometres per hour.

My Biology File

4 You are going to produce a leaflet about butterflies. Find out the following information about them.

- How they find food
- Why they are important for the environment
- If they face the same problems as bees
- How we can protect them
- How many species there are in the world/in your country

5 Work in pairs or small groups and make your leaflet including pictures or photos if possible.
