

# What's the Buzz about Bees?

SUNDAY, MAY 29TH, 2016

~ *By Kirsten Antony, R.N., C.R.*

Summer is here, the sun is shining and the bees are buzzing. You may see them fly from flower to flower, working away at gathering nectar and return to their hive. Bees are an integral part of our lives. Bees help feed us, provide healing honey, and make the world a more beautiful place by pollinating the flowers. Bees also are responsible for pollinating much of our food crops. Among the extensive list of foods that bees pollinate are: apples, mangos, peaches, strawberries, cashews, onions and coffee. It is estimated that one out of every three bites of food we eat are because of bees and their ability to pollinate.

Besides providing us with delicious food to eat, bees produce honey which has been known throughout history for its healing properties such as promoting energy and healing wounds. Honey contains large amounts of B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, D, and E and some minerals. Specifically, Manuka honey has been studied for its antimicrobial properties in wound care. Honey as a curative agent is no longer seen as folklore or alternative. From sore throats, to allergies, to the common cold, many people enjoy using honey to sooth many ailments.

Over the last 10 years, beekeepers have noticed bee colonies dying or disappearing altogether. This is known as colony collapse disorder. The finger has been pointed to insecticides of the neonicotinoid family. It has been shown that when bees are affected by this insecticide, it negates their ability to fly back to the hive by altering their cognitive function. Europe banned all neonicotinoids and will have results on their studies available in

2017. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency acknowledged in January 2016 for the first time that a specific neonicotinoid does indeed affect the hive's bee population. This is a preliminary assessment and will need to be peer reviewed before any new policy can be put into place.

This is really hopeful news that colony collapse may yet be corrected. Sometimes issues like these seem much larger than any one person can correct. However, here is a "Honey Do" list of things that can be done to promote honey bees in your local area:

- Plant flowers that bees love such as Echinacea, Poppies, Black-Eyed Susan, Alyssum and Sunflowers.
- Plant a variety of flowers that bloom from early Spring to late Fall.
- Bees love wildflowers and are attracted to the colors of yellow, white, blue and violet.
- Plant herbs such as Lavender, Bee Balm, Mints, Rosemary and Sage.
- Provide a natural habitat for nesting. Bees nest in areas like dry grasses, wood piles and brush areas.

A couple of other tips for promoting the bee population:

- Buy local, raw honey.
- Buy local, organic foods.



*Kirsten Antony is a Registered Nurse and Certified Reflexologist and has been practicing Holistic Nursing for over 20 years. Kirsten's business, Heel Your Feet, offers mobile Medical Pedicures and Reflexology to Denver area residents. If you are having trouble trimming toenails, suffer from ingrown nails, corns, calluses or foot pain, please call Kirsten for information or a foot care appointment.*

*Please visit [www.kirstenantony.com](http://www.kirstenantony.com) or call 303-668-8992.*