

# The Village Garden Center's Garden Club Newsletter

## July 2009



### Saving the Honey Bee

The topic for this newsletter, was going to be exciting new shrubs for your landscape. As I was researching my topic, I came across several websites that listed information about the decline of honey bees. When I looked at the specific information and the alarming rates of decline, I decided to devote the letter to the honey bee crisis.

**Did you know....**Native bees don't live in hives. They can make their homes in solitary underground dwellings.

Over the last three years more than one in three honey bee colonies has died nationwide, posing a serious risk to our natural food supply. One cause of these losses is an alarming phenomenon called colony collapse disorder or CCD. When a hive experiences CCD, the honey bees mysteriously desert their hive and die. CCD symptoms have been reported by more than thirty-five states across the U.S and in many other countries.

Researchers do not know exactly what causes CCD, but they believe that there may be many factors contributing to the problem, including viruses, mites, chemical exposure, and poor nutrition.

**Did you know....**Honey bees are the only insect that produce food for humans.

One out of three bites of food an average American eats is directly attributed to honey bee pollination. Honey bees are responsible for the pollination of more than 100 crops, including fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds and provide 80% of the country's pollination. The honey bee is responsible for \$15 billion in U.S. agricultural crops each year.

Bees fly approximately 10 to 15 miles per hour and visit about 50-100 flowers in each pollination trip. To produce one pound of honey, honey bees must visit two million flowers and travel 55,000 miles.

**Garden Club Meeting- July 18<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 A.M.  
Hope to see everyone there!**

**\*REMINDER\*** Please call and RSVP for the next garden meeting! It makes the food we serve and the give always much easier to put together. Thank you so much for your consideration.

So you are probably asking what can I do to help? Saving a honey bee, is as simple as planting a seed. Planting a garden to attract and keep honey bees is a simple task to do. Bees gather both nectar and pollen from plants. When you are selecting plants for your garden, choose ones that are attractive to bees. Talk to a horticulturalist at your local nursery for plant ideas. Just like us, bees need food anytime they are active, mostly from spring through fall.

**Did you know....**Honey never spoils, and is the ONLY food that contains all the substances necessary to sustain life

It is nice to select a plant with a long blooming season or a group of plants that together will offer flowers from spring through fall. If you have the space, it's great to use ten or more bee plants as a grouping in your garden. If you don't

have the space for that many plants, simply plant the number that you can manage.

Honey bees also require water when they are foraging in your garden. You can provide water by putting a thin layer of water in a shallow dish (like butterflies use). They will also use your birdbath, gutter, or swimming pool.

If pest control is necessary, take the time to select insect-specific insecticides. By using caution in their selection and application, you can avoid accidentally harming the bees that visit your garden. If using herbicides in your garden, always use the application amount and application procedure outlined on the product label. Incorrect use of herbicides may damage the flowers that bees depend on for food. Hand-weeding or using a thick layer of mulch can also suppress weeds.

Leave the flowers on the plant until the blooms are gone-then deadhead. This way, the bees will make the most of each flower.

The best plant you can plant for a bee, is the lavender plant. Plant it with a darker plant behind it- it makes the lavender easier for the bee to see. Other perennials great for bees are:

- Asters
- Rudbeckia
- Goldenrod
- Joe Pye Weed
- Lupine
- Penstemon
- Coneflower
- Salvia
- Sedum
- Sunflower
- Agastache
- Zinnia



**GARDEN CLUB SPECIALS - August**  
30% off to garden club members only  
Green Tree (10 gallon bucket) Limit 1  
Hardy Pampas Grass Limit 1  
Echinacea- 'Summersky' Limit 1