



## Honey Bee Facts



The Honey bee, *Apis mellifera* a social bee is a familiar domesticated bee that has been providing humans with their hive products (honey and beeswax) for thousands of years.



History tells us that the honey bee has been repeatedly introduced to the island for honey production and has on a number of occasions died out before being re-introduced, but is currently quite common. Kept in artificial hives, with a single queen and many 1,000s of workers (around 12mm), swarms are sometimes able to set up short lived 'wild' colonies in trees, garden sheds, old tyres and house ceilings. St Helena's honey bees are uniquely disease-free.

Pollen and gumwood resin is collected in conspicuous 'pollen baskets' on their hind legs. Bees also collect nectar by visiting flowers on fruit trees and also provide a valuable pollinator service and honey is produced across the island.



## Support Beekeepers

Honey bees are susceptible to bacterial infection, viruses, parasites, lack of suitable flowering plants and water, and pesticides. Beekeepers are the honey bees health plan. Good nutritional health is critical for honey bees to combat these many assaults, and having a diverse and plentiful pollinator habitat (flowering plants) is the key to the honey bee's diet. St Helena's honey bees are free from many of the well known international diseases and the importation of honey, hive and some honey products to the island is banned to prevent the introduction of various bee diseases which are now prevalent around the world, including South Africa. **Please check relevant legislation if you are unsure.**



## What YOU can do for Honey Bees?

- Provide honey bee friendly habitat –
  - ◇ Growing native plants will help the plant population.
  - ◇ Growing vegetables will supply you with fresh vegetables and at the same time attract bees to your garden to help pollinate your plants.
- Bees visit flowering plants, including invasive plants, endeavour to have more garden variety and endemic plants to feed on, we can reduce the invasive plant population which compete with our endemic and garden variety plant for space and nutrients.
- Work with your employer, local community, schools, and others to enhance pollinator habitat.
- As a land owner or manager, provide access to forage habitat to beekeepers for their honey bees.
- Honey bees are attracted to many common easy to grow plants.

Plant some flowers, buy the delicious local honey and support your local beekeepers!



# The Honey Bee

## On St Helena



## How You Can Help Them

The St Helena National Trust produced this brochure.  
Feedback is welcome.  
For more information, please call 22224





## We Depend on Honey Bees



One out of three bites of food we eat depends on pollinators. Some estimates say that honey bees are responsible for 80% of all pollination today – that's most of our pollinator-dependent diet!

Bees are found on invasive and endemic plants, however they generally prefer plants that produce both nectar and pollen. They are attracted to gardens with a range of different flowering plants. The best flowers for bees will bloom for a long period of time, and herb gardens are particularly attractive when allowed to flower if we grow enough of them, particularly single-headed flowers will provide the most nectar, and brightly coloured plants will act as signposts guiding bees to your garden. Bees love yellow flowers; daisies and sunflowers are good flower choices. In addition to flowers, herbs are an incredibly attractive feature, they can exist in a small spaces, even on a window ledge. Plants like parsley, rosemary, lavender and mint – all of which have kitchen uses – can attract bees and other beneficial insects.

### Endemic plants

Bees visit some of St. Helena endemic plants, be part of the conservation efforts by promoting our endemics, including planting a tree at Millennium Forest.



### Coffee

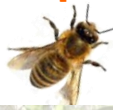
Coffee does self-pollinate, however, pollination especially by bees during their short-lived flowers that bloom in early summer increases fruit set.

### Water

Little sources of fresh water will encourage bees to frequently visit your garden. At the same time, the use of insecticides should be kept to a minimum if they are used at all.



## Some plants & vegetables that will attract bees to your garden



Below are examples, but not limited to.

### Fruit trees

Mango, Medlam, Guava, Loquat, Pomegranate, Papaya, Avocado, Apple, Peach, Pear, Plum, Star fruit, Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit & Orange



### Endemic

Gumwood  
Scrubwood  
Dwarf ebony  
Bellflower



### Garden plants

Aster (Daisies)  
Snapdragons  
Calendulas or marigolds  
Bee flower  
Cornflowers  
Lavender  
Poppies & Sunflowers  
Honeysuckle  
Red Hot Poker



### Herbs

Mint  
Rosemary  
Thyme  
Parsley



## No Fear of Stings

Many people are wary of insects such as bees and wasps. About 0.5% of children and 3% of adults have sting allergies from bees, wasps, and ants which can sometimes lead to systemic reactions.

To reduce the risk of a sting from bees in your yard or garden, remember:

- Foraging bees collect pollen and nectar to feed their young and themselves. They are NOT looking for someone to sting!
- Teach children to OBSERVE at a safe distance (at least 20ft) and not disturb bees or wasps if you discover their nests.
- You are safe watching bees as they fly from flower to flower.
- Honey bees are defensive within 10 or 20 feet of their nests. Do not visit a hive with perfumes or strong smelling deodorants on.
- Remember, stay back and share the space!
- If you are stung and have an adverse reaction—consult a doctor.

