

BEE AWARENESS

by Carol Drinkwater

www.caroldrinkwater.com/bee-awareness



Arriving home after sixteen months travelling around the Mediterranean in quest of the history of the olive tree, I discovered that the fourteen honeybee colonies that had been residents on our Olive Farm for over a decade had died off or disappeared. I telephoned the beekeeper who had always tended the hives during our absences and learned that he had was on the point of bankruptcy. Out of his entire stock of 103 colonies, only a handful had survived...

When such devastation hit us directly I began to look into the problem in more depth. What had been the cause of this destruction?

I learned that pollinators, particularly honeybees, are under serious threat. They need our help. A third of the western world's honeybees have disappeared. Pesticides, habitat loss, parasites, intensive farming, all have been cited as causes and I believe there is an urgent need for awareness about land management. I also believe that no matter where we live, no matter how small our patch (even window-boxes) we have the possibility to help avert this deepening of this crisis.

I have created this page on the website because I want to be able to keep abreast with what is happening in the world of apiary and to share what I am learning. You can email me, offering your thoughts and feedback – whether an expert or novice, I am keen to hear from you and your experiences.

A FEW FACTS TO REFLECT UPON

- Honey bees are the only insects that produce food for humans.
- It is estimated that about a third of the food in your local store, *épicerie*, greengrocer's, depends on honey-bee pollination.
- Honey bees visit approximately two million flowers to produce ONE pound of honey.
- To produce TWO pounds of honey, our little girls travel a distance equal to four times around the earth.
- Please let us protect and save our honey bees

BEE AWARE

- Become a beekeeper if you are able to, and the idea appeals to you.
If that does not appeal or is not feasible:
- Plant up window boxes
- Rethink your garden without lawns
- Leave the daisies and dandelions – they feed the bees
- Resuscitate unused plots, corners of lands and road verges with nectar-rich plants
- Plant nectar-rich wildflowers wherever you can in order that colonies of honeybees can survive at peace, foraging the land and its gifts without threat

Another alternative is a scheme the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) runs called *Adopt A Beehive* www.adoptabeehive.co.uk. If you live outside Britain and you have links to other associations, please let us know them.

We do not put tick collars on our dogs or use insect-repelling products against the ticks because those on the market here in France contain *imidacloprid*. I have come across this insecticide ingredient before. It is an ingredient within the pesticide sprayed onto sunflowers here in France and has been judged to have a very detrimental effect on honeybees. Click here to read a wikipedia link about it. There is also plenty of info on this subject in RETURN TO THE THE OLIVE FARM

If you would like to get in touch with beekeepers, you can do so via the *London Beekeepers Association*
John Chapple, the chairman of the London Beekeepers' Association
123 Perryn Road, London, W3 7LT
Tel: 020 8749 7773
john.chapple@lbka.org.uk

Whatever you decide, the next time you pour a spoonful of honey, celebrate the extraordinary creature that brought it to your table. Remember, honeybees are endangered. Help the Honeybee. Without her, our diet will be a paltry one.