



The Garden Club of the Upper Keys

News & Notes

April 2022

Inside this issue:

PRESIDENT'S Message	2
A Note From the Editor...	3
Notes From the Directors	3-5
Garden Get-Together	6-7
What Do Honeybees Do and How YOU Can Protect Them	8-12
Notable Dates and Birthdays	13

General Membership Meeting

Please join us at the Francis Tracy Garden Center on Tuesday, April 19 for our monthly General Membership meeting. We will have a social hour from 10-11 am followed by the guest speaker presentation and meeting at 11 am. Social hour will be outdoors. We have been unable to determine if our guest speaker will be able to present outdoors.

Although Covid cases are still considered "low" in Monroe County per the most recent CDC guidance ([COVID-19 by County | CDC](#)), we recommend wearing a mask if the presentation is held indoors.

Meeting Agenda

- **Call to Order & Welcome:** President Kathy Janco will welcome members to our meeting.
- **Guest Speaker:** Kathy will introduce Isabelle Ballestas of Keez Beez, who will deliver a presentation on bees.
- **Guest Speaker Presentation: Keez Beez.** Isabelle will discuss bees and beekeeping. She will also bring some honey to taste and sell. A brief introduction to Keez Beez is provided below.
- **Business Meeting:** Presiding over the business meeting, President Janco will share recent Board actions and decisions.

Keez Beez

Keez Beez was started in 2007 by two married, recently retired professionals who had moved to live in the Florida Keys. Isabelle gave John a single beehive as a surprise birthday present which was kept on the upstairs balcony of their new home on Sombrero Isle, Marathon. Neither had any intention of becoming full time beekeepers or honey producers.

Amazingly, that single beehive produced over 200 pounds of delicious raw honey in the first year! That's way more honey than any retired couple could use, and much of it was given away to friends, relatives and neighbors who were all so impressed with the taste and quality of the honey that the consensus was "You've got to sell this!"

The first dozen one-pound glass bottles went out to the local health food store in Marathon in the summer of 2007. It sold within a week and the store wanted more honey. A Lot more honey!

What started out as a hobby in 2007 soon became a thriving business and has grown to 600 beehives and a variety of products. Today, Keez Beez honey can be found in many independent stores in Florida and in major supermarket chains like Publix, Milams, and Winn Dixie. The story of Keez Beez and the products available can be found on their website: <https://www.keezbeez.com/>.





~~~~~  
*The garden suggests there might be a place where we can meet nature halfway!*

~Michael Pollan

**The Garden Club  
of the  
Upper Keys, Inc.  
at  
The Francis Tracy  
Garden Center  
94040 Overseas Hwy.  
Tavernier, FL 33070**

**Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 373  
Tavernier, FL 33070**

#### **Board of Directors**

**President - Kathy Janco  
 V-President - Laurie Brooks  
 Treasurer - Anne Makowsky  
 Secretary - Laura Hartner  
 Directors of:  
 Fundraising - Kathy Holmes  
 Hospitality - Betty Ann Gear  
 and Fran Reig  
 House - Christine Hudson  
 Membership - Charlene  
 Regenhardt  
 Program - Patti Graham  
 Property - Vacant  
 Publicity - Pat Uhl**

### *From the desk of President Kathy Janco ...*

I find it hard to believe it is already April. It might be the second to last month before we break from our formal meetings for the summer but we are still going full speed ahead. So many of us are here during the summer that we like to keep meeting up, fixing up, cleaning up, and doing fun projects in the garden during the summer. So do not forget to keep logging into our website and checking your email during the summer to see what's going on so we can see each other and keep having fun this summer.

Next time when you arrive at the clubhouse, please take a look at the beginning stages of the update to the front door entrance beds. Several of our members are giving the entrance of the clubhouse a beautiful and fresh update.

Looking forward to seeing you all at our April meeting.

Stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,  
Kathy



*Please Remember to Sign up for our Upcoming Field Trip to  
 Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC)  
 Thursday, April 28, 2022 9 am—12 pm*

#### **Agenda:**

- |                  |                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00 .....       | Leave clubhouse, carpool* to University of Florida<br>18905 SW 280th Street Homestead, Fla. 33030<br>(takes about an hour)              |
| 9:00-9:30 .....  | Welcome to TREC by our guide Alan Chambers, PhD,<br>Assistant Professor Tropical Fruit Genetics & Breeding<br>tropicalfruitbreeding.com |
| 9:30-10:30 ..... | Vanilla collection tour                                                                                                                 |
| 10:30-Noon ..... | TREC field tour including tropical fruit tree collections                                                                               |

Lunch White Lion Cafe 146 NW 7th Street Homestead Fl. 33030  
(approximately 9 min from TREC)

Please RSVP to Patti Graham for both the tour and lunch  
by Wednesday April 20, 2022

\* If you need a ride or are able to take others in your car, please let Patti know.

### *Potluck Luncheon on May 17*

Our May 17 meeting is the final meeting of the fiscal year where we install the new Board of Directors and have a final opportunity to socialize before the summer hiatus. We encourage everyone to bring a favorite dish to share. More details will be provided in the May issue of *News & Notes*.

## A note from the editor...

This month's General Membership Meeting will include a presentation on bees — it's swarming season!

I've been taking the Master Gardener's training and one of my classmates shared a video of a bee swarm at her home. So we got to talking about bee swarms in class, and our County Extension Agent, Michelle Leonard-Mularz told us some interesting facts about bees and how they communicate. Last year, I saw a bee swarm at our home and I found out that Laurie Brooks had one at her home a few years ago. I guess bee swarms are more common than I thought.

What we learned and I would like to share is the swarming bees are very docile. They are looking for a new home, and they usually move on within a day or two when they find a place they like better. If you happen to experience a swarm at your place, don't panic and do nothing for two days. If they decide they want to take up residence in a spot that's unacceptable to you, you can call a registered beekeeper and they can usually move them. So, don't try to kill them, try to help them find a more suitable place to live.

This month's issue includes a number of interesting articles, crafts, and recipes centered around honey bees, many which were written or brought to my attention by Laura Hartner. She did a lot of the "heavy lifting" on getting this month's newsletter put together, for which I am grateful since I have been a little busier than usual. Thank you, Laura!

Since we have a scheduled field trip to TREC later this month (see page 2), we will not have a scheduled Garden Get-Together. But, Laura found two DIY

projects that use honey or beeswax that you can make at home (see pages 6-7). I'm especially intrigued with the beeswax wraps and wonder if we should try making a few to sell at the fall fundraising event. Maybe I'll give it a try over the summer hiatus. Since I had a couple square inches of blank space, I tucked in a recipe for Honey Butter on page 4 that you might like to try.

Another article Laura found was a blog about honeybees (and a little about native bees). It was written by Dianne Hoffmaster and I found it fascinating, so I asked Diane if I could include it in our club newsletter. She graciously agreed and her article can be found on pages 8-12. It contains a lot of fun and interesting facts as well as what all of us, as homeowners and stewards of our environment, can do to help bees survive and thrive.

Our Yard Sale on April 2 was a huge success! I was unable to attend, so I didn't get any photos of the sale, but was told the turnout was great. We also are looking for suggestions on naming our fall fundraising event. You'll see the announcement on page 5.

I appreciate the suggestions and articles provided by our members. Different topics appeal to different members and we want our newsletter to include something for everyone. Please continue to send ideas for articles or just have a go at writing one for our next issue!

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the April Meeting, and at the Pot Luck for the May General Membership Meeting (see page 2).

Cordially,  
Charlene Regenhardt



## Notes from the Directors...

**HOSPITALITY CO-DIRECTORS Betty Ann Gear and Fran Reig** need volunteers for upcoming meetings at the clubhouse. Assistance includes helping to set-up and clean-up refreshments at monthly General Membership meetings and special events. You can volunteer for specific months or for the entire club year. It's a great way for new members to connect with others and be active. If you are interested in helping out, please call Betty Ann or Fran.

**HOUSE DIRECTOR Christine Hudson** continues to ensure all of the indoor equipment—from fire extinguishers to AC units—are functioning properly and efficiently. Please let Christine know if we are running

low on any clubhouse supplies, if something gets broken or if anything needs special attention.

**VICE-PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION Laurie Brooks** continues to set up meetings for the Florida Keys Native Plant ID class with Jim Duquesnel. The next class will be April 19 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. Jim Duquesnel will be leading us through Vines Part 2.

Laurie continues to participate in the workdays for the REEF gardens as well as the workdays for the clubhouse gardens. The next workday will be Saturday, April 16 from 10 to 11 AM, followed by a workday session at GCUK from 11 AM to noon. The workday was moved to Saturday due to the Easter holiday.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Laurie also continues to support the Ocean Studies Charter School's gardens and is currently working on a committee to create an outdoor classroom (trails, kiosks and signage) for the Hammock. Trails and eco-pod locations were staked and a professional survey was done by a biologist. The eco-environment planter gardens in front of the school are doing well as is the water garden in back.

The Master Gardener Plant Clinics continue to be held at our clubhouse on the third Wednesday of the month. The next one will be April 20 from 9 AM until noon. Plant Clinics have resumed at the Murray Nelson building as well. The next one will be May 4 (first Wednesday of the month) from 9 AM until noon.

The most recent support cooking for God's Kitchen was March 31. Our club cooks when there is a fifth Thursday in the month. Our next date to cook will be Thursday, June 30. Please contact Cindy Davis or Betty Ann Gear to help make meatloaf and sides for this worthwhile community support function.

Laurie recently created lending and reference libraries on book cases in the sunroom of the clubhouse. The reference library book shelf will be used to house the Master Gardener plant clinic box and materials. She also added a catalog and magazine exchange shelf on the lending library side and will request books to be ordered by Master Gardeners for the Reference Library.

Laurie recently made a field trip to St. Justin's Church property on March 12 with a woman who had visited us at GCUK to scope out an invasive/exotic removal project. She is working on scoping the project as a potential community service project for school-aged youngsters. She will likely need a few club volunteers to help organize and supervise the effort. More information will be provided as it is developed.

Laurie encourages everyone to continue to send her ideas for community outreach/in-reach – particularly ways to partner with youth in our community. She has been working with the rest of the executive board members to renew our scholarship awards that were suspended last year due to the need to cancel fundraising events.

**PROPERTY DIRECTOR:** Laurie Brooks, Kathy Janco and Charlene Regenhardt continue to oversee responsibilities for property management until the end of the fiscal year. Assuming that the current slate of officers is approved, Charlene will take on this position for the next fiscal year.

The workdays and Adopt-a-Bed initiative have helped make the workload more manageable. **The Board would like to thank our members for their continued support in maintaining our property!**

A BIG thank you goes to DeeDee Barreto and Martha Edwards for taking on the weekly watering chores. Another initiative that we started this past month is sprucing up the front porch bed to make it more colorful and attractive. Pat Saunders, Jenny Crittenden, Kathie Carr, and Laurie Brooks have been helping with planning and executing the work, which is underway.

### Property Management Volunteers Needed

We are still looking for a few volunteers to help lighten the maintenance workload by watering one day a week and/or assisting with our new plant nursery. Both of these maintenance efforts require regular attention but are not very strenuous or time consuming (each would only be about a 1-hour per week commitment). If we could get assistance with these light duty tasks one day a week, it would greatly lessen the workload. We are hoping to enlist a pool of volunteers that can sign up for one or two months duration on a rotating basis. In addition, we encourage members to pitch in on workdays, which are typically the first Tuesday (9-11 AM) and the third Sunday (11 AM-12 PM) of each month. The next scheduled workdays are Tuesday, May 3 and Sunday May 22.

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR Patti Graham** has been lining up speakers for our General Membership meetings. The speaker at the April meeting will be Isabella Ballestas of Keez Beez, as announced on page 1. The May meeting includes the installation ceremony for new officers and will include a Potluck Luncheon (see announcement on page 2).

(Continued on page 5)

### Honey Butter Recipe

Have you ever gone to a nice restaurant that serves fresh bread with butter that is whipped up with a little honey? It makes the bread go from good to decadent and it's so easy to make! All you need to do is whip up 1/2 pound of room temperature butter and drizzle in 1/4 cup of honey after the butter starts to get fluffy. It adds a nice touch when you have dinner guests or a family celebration!

Don't be afraid to experiment! You can add a dash of cinnamon and/or teaspoon of vanilla extract.

There are many other variations for flavored butters, just "do a search on "compound butter recipes!"



(Continued from page 4)

Patti is also finalizing plans for the field trip to the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (see announcement on page 2).

Patti already has speakers lined up for this coming fall:

- September, Jason Downing, Orchid Biologist from Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
- October, Jim West will present on the Plight of the Monarch Butterfly
- November, Janice Duquesnel will present on the Biology and Ecology of Mangroves

Patti continues to work on planning potential programs and field trips. One of the field trips is a visit to the Green Turtle Hammock which is the new home of Florida Bay Forever, a non-profit dedicated to protecting and preserving Florida Bay.

**PUBLICITY DIRECTOR Pat Uhl** has been working with Kathy Holmes and Patti Graham to support publicity efforts for meetings and fundraisers. She posts information and photographs regularly on our Facebook page and works with Lonell Rice and Amy Jorgenson on website updates.

Pat has been actively involved with preparing fliers and e-mail blasts for supplemental fund raisers. She leveraged a wealth of free venues to get the word out about Garden Walk as well as other activities. Pat and Amy Jorgensen, our Webmaster, set up a page on our website to allow Garden Walk tickets to be purchased online via PayPal, and they plan to continue to work together to make other online payment options available, including membership dues!

Pat is working on plans to update and supplement the club's existing brochures. She is also working with a committee to update our sign along US-1.

**FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR Kathy Holmes** wants to thank all of our members for a very successful Yard Sale event! A special thank-you goes out to Debbie Sue Jonas and Laura Hartner for co-chairing the event. Also, don't forget to pick up a few reusable grocery bags at the Tavernier Winn Dixie!

### Grocery Bags at Winn Dixie Tavernier

Winn Dixie has an in-store program to sell reusable grocery bags to help fundraise for local non-profits. GCUK was selected as their non-profit for April 2022. We receive a donation of \$1 for each bag purchased. Please encourage your friends and family to purchase these environmentally friendly bags during the month of April.

Kathy is already starting to identify potential gardens for Garden Walk 2023. It is not just the job of the Fundraising Director or Garden Walk chair, all members should be on the lookout for appropriate gardens. For questions or suggestions, please call or email Kathy Holmes (contact info is on the Resource Links Page). If anyone has other fundraising ideas for next year, please connect with her.

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Charlene Regenhardt** continues to process membership forms. As of April 15, 92 members have submitted their membership forms. If you have not yet mailed yours in, please take the time to do so today, as they are overdue.

Charlene would also like to welcome our three newest members that joined this past month: Tara Trejo and Rick Jamison (family members) and Karen Copen!

### WHAT'S IN A NAME? NAME THAT EVENT!



**Gingerbread  
Craft Market**

What's in a name? Names simply act as labels that distinguish one thing from another. The fundraising event the Garden Club sponsors in the fall has been called a variety of names through the years, such as the Plant Sale, the Fall Festival, and most recently, the Gingerbread Craft Market. The Board has heard that some members would like to change the name of our fundraising event that is held the weekend after Thanksgiving. The Board is considering a change in the date of this event to the first or second Saturday of November, so this is an opportune time to also look at this event in terms of a name.

The Board would like you, as a member to suggest a name for this event. It could be one of the ones previously used or one that you think is fitting for a fundraiser at this time of year. Be creative and have fun with this task!

Please enter your choice in the jar placed by the meeting sign-in sheet at the April or May General Membership meeting or send by email, with your name, to: gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com no later than May 1, 2022. A Board committee will then review all of the entries, select one to be the name of the fall fundraising event, and share its name with you.

# Garden Get-Together

## Honey and Beeswax Items You Can Make at Home

By Laura Hartner



During the “Garden Get-Together” sessions, I have tried to make the activities related to the speaker presentation topics or to something that can be used with items from a garden. This month, I will not hold a session due to our field trip but I thought you might like to know about two activities that you could easily do at home. Since the presentation this month will be about bees and honey from Keez Beez, the first activity was taken from [www.thekitchen.com](http://www.thekitchen.com). by Emily Han.

### Infused Honey

Infused honey can be used to sweeten tea, lemonade, fruit, and baked goods. It can be stirred into salad dressings and marinades or served with a cheese plate. Herbal honeys may also be used medicinally, for example, sage honey to relieve a sore throat or chamomile honey to promote relaxation. If you are looking to gift an item from your kitchen, infused honey is a great choice!

- **Basic formula:** Use about 1-2 tablespoons of dried herbs per 1 cup (8 ounces) of honey.
- **Variety of Honey:** A light, mild flavored honey generally works best.
- **Herbs and Spices to Use:** Use a single herb or a combination of herbs. Herbs that work well include rosemary, sage, thyme, mint, lemon balm, lavender, chamomile, rose petals and pine needles. You can also use spices like vanilla beans, cinnamon sticks and star anise.



### Directions:

1. **Prepare the herbs.** They should be dry to limit water activity and avoid mold. They may be in the form of whole sprigs or separated leaves, buds and petals. Chopped herbs may infuse more quickly but they may be harder to strain out. To dry fresh herbs, use an air or oven drying method, dehydrator or microwave.
2. **Combine herbs and honey.** Place herbs in the bottom of a jar and fill the jar almost to the top with honey. Using an wooden implement, like a chopstick, stir to coat the herbs with honey. Top off with more honey to fill the jar. Wipe the jar rim with a clean cloth. Label the jar with the contents and the date.
3. **Infuse.** Let the herbs infuse for a least 5 days. If the herbs float to the top, turn over the jar a few times to keep them well coated. For a more intense flavor, infuse for another week or longer.
4. **Strain** the honey into a clear jar. Depending on the volume of honey and herbs and the size of the jar, you may need to do this in stages.
5. **Store** the honey in a tightly covered jar in a cool dry place. It will last indefinitely.

(Continued on Page 7)

## Herbal Honey Recipes from Mountain Rose Herbs

Source: [How to Make Herb-Infused Honey + Recipes \(mountainroseherbs.com\)](http://mountainroseherbs.com)

### Cinnamon Spice Honey

Yields 1 quart (32 oz.)

- 1 1/4 cups organic cassia cinnamon chips
- 3/4 cup organic ginger root
- 6 organic cardamom pods
- 4 organic star anise pods
- Honey (raw local honey is best)

### Sleepy Time Honey

Yields 1 quart (32 oz.)

- 3/4 cup organic lavender flowers
- 3/4 cup organic chamomile flowers
- Honey (raw local honey is best)

(Continued from Page 6)

## DIY Beeswax Wraps

The next activity is to make a zero-waste beeswax wrap. These wraps are used for covering dishes or wrapping sandwiches or other items for refrigerator storage and can be used over and over instead of a single-use plastic product. To reuse, simply rinse thoroughly under cold water with a tiny bit of dishwashing liquid and let dry. Don't use these wraps for meat though, because you can never wash them in hot water - you'd lose the wax.

Several vendors such as JennyJoysSoap found at [JennyJoysSoap.com](http://JennyJoysSoap.com) sells a pre-mixed beeswax formulated waxing bar as well as complete kits with all materials needed and instructions. Each waxing bar contains pine resin sustainably harvested in the USA, jojoba oil and beeswax. One bar will make a 13" x 14" cotton wrap or several smaller ones. The wrap lasts for about a year and you can "refresh" it by reapplying the wax to the fabric.

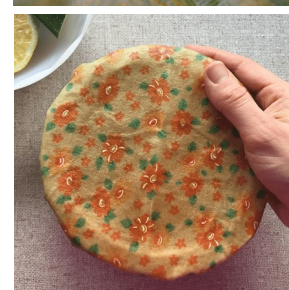
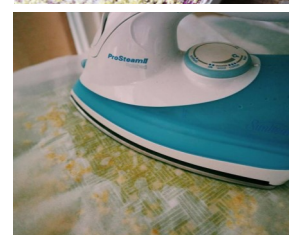
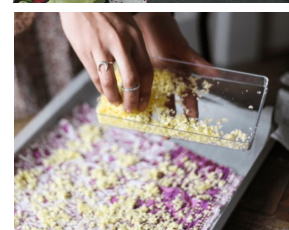
Alternatively, you can use plain beeswax without the jojoba and resin. The idea is that resin improves the stickiness and jojoba oil helps to keep the resin and beeswax combined, but some people prefer the wraps with plain beeswax.

If you buy a waxing bar or block of beeswax, you will need to grate the product to sprinkle over the fabric as shown in the directions below. You can also buy beeswax pellets at places like Amazon (such as the source found [here](#)) that will allow you to skip the step of grating the wax.

### Directions:

1. Cut a piece of fabric (use 100% cotton or linen) to the desired size for the wrap. It is suggested to use pinking shears to help prevent fraying, but it isn't necessary.
2. Protect your ironing surface with old towels and baking (parchment) paper. If you desire to use a table instead of an ironing board (which may be necessary for a large wrap), you may want to use a piece of plywood to protect the table surface from heat as well as any possible wax residue.
3. Preheat iron to the lower end of the "cotton" setting. Make sure that the steam setting is turned off (Emptying any water in the iron will ensure this). You can also wrap the bottom of your iron with tin foil to protect it.
4. Place the fabric for the wrap on top of the baking paper. Sprinkle grated beeswax evenly over the fabric surface.
5. Cover the top completely with baking paper. Iron the fabric under the baking paper, continuously moving the iron to avoid scorching the wax or fabric. You will be able to see that the wax is melting and distributing throughout the fabric because the baking paper will appear translucent from the wax.
6. Check that the wax has melted evenly into the fabric. It should look "wet" when the wax has been absorbed properly. If you see any "dry" spots, sprinkle some more grated wax and repeat the melting.
7. Let cool, and start using them in place of plastic cling wrap!

Source: [How To Make Beeswax Wrap - with Recipe \(sewmuchasier.com\)](http://HowToMakeBeeswaxWrap-withRecipe( sewmuchasier.com))





# What Do Honeybees Do and How YOU Can Protect Them

By Dianne Hoffmaster, April 10, 2022 (Reprinted with permission)  
Source: <https://www.turningclockback.com/what-do-honeybees-do/>

Save the pollinators is becoming a popular rallying cry amongst environmentalists. Have you ever wondered WHY? What do honeybees do that makes them so vital to our society? Bees are dying in record numbers, and we don't really know why. Why are bees so important to the environment? And as a homeowner, how can you help?

Without bees, our food supply is in trouble. A third of the food that we eat is pollinated by honey bees, so if they die out, we could be looking at a serious food crisis.

We can all help protect honey bees by doing our part to keep them healthy and safe. As homeowners, there are some things we can do right now to make our yards more bee-friendly. You can plant a garden full of bee-friendly flowering plants, or provide a water source for bees. You can also install a beehive in your yard, or become a beekeeper yourself!

In this article, we will explore a bit about the honey bee and how YOU as a homeowner can protect these vital insects.

## The importance of pollinators

So what do honeybees DO and why are bees so important to the environment? Honey bees are a vital part of our ecosystem. They pollinate our food crops as well as wild plants out in nature. One out of every three bites of food that we take is thanks to pollinators like bees!

Bees are also responsible for \$15 billion dollars worth of crops in the United States each year. Without these pollinating insects, our global economy crashing would be of little concern since we would starve to death.

## 10 interesting facts about honey bees

So, you think you know everything there is about bees, right? They produce honey and if we annoy them, they offer painful stings in return. There are a ton of bee facts that you might NOT know. Here is a mini honeybee fact sheet for you:

- Bees are not born knowing how to make honey. The older bees have to teach the younger bees.
- A bee will visit 50-100 flowers during a collection trip.
- Bees can fly up to 15 miles per hour in their natural environment.
- Bees communicate with each other by doing a special dance.
- Honeybees never sleep! They take turns guarding the hive.
- A bee's wings flap 11,400 times per minute.
- Bees have been around for over 30 million years.
- There are 20,000 bee species in the world.
- The average lifespan of a worker bee is just 40 days.
- Bees are attracted to the color blue more than any other color. See my list of blue flowers farther down!



## What do bees do all day, anyhow?

So, what do honeybees do all day, anyhow? I'm going to give you a very brief rundown on the life of a bee. I promise it will be brief!

First off, this refers to bees that live as social insects like the beloved honeybee. There are solitary bees that live their whole lives alone, however, the ever-popular honeybee lives in bee colonies with a very specific social structure.

## A day in the life of a worker bee:

The female worker bees are responsible for collecting nectar and pollen from flowers. Yes, they are all female. They also build and repair the hive, care for the larvae, and guard the hive entrance. They are the ones that pollinate plants, carry pollen from plant to plant to help plants grow, and allow our garden to be a food source for our families.



They are also called forager bees (since they collect nectar and pollen) and will visit 50-100 flowers during a collection trip. They store the nectar in a special stomach and bring it back to the hive. The nectar is then passed to other bees who will turn it into honey.

Pollen is used to feed the larvae. It is also gathered and stored in what are called pollen baskets, which are located on the bee's hind legs.

When worker bees aren't out collecting nectar and trying to carry pollen around, they are busy building wax comb, which is used to store the honey and pollen. They also spend time fanning their wings to keep the hive cool.

### **A day in the life of a queen bee:**

The queen's job is to lay eggs. There is only one queen in a hive and she can lay up to 2,000 eggs per day! That's a lot of responsibility.

The queen is the only bee in the hive that can mate and lay eggs. She will go on a mating flight, during which she will mate with up to 20 different drones (male bees). Once she has mated, she will store the sperm in a special sac called the spermatheca. She will use this sperm to fertilize her eggs for the rest of her life.

The queen is the largest bee in the hive. She can live for up to 5 years. When it is time to replace her or branch out into creating other colonies, the worker bees will create a new queen by feeding a larva a special diet of royal jelly. Worker bees place the potential future queens in separate cells in the hive. The first larvae to mature will become the new queen. Lucky her!

### **A day in the life of a drone:**

The drones are the male bees in the hive. Their only job is to mate with the queen. Once they have mated, they die. Poor little buggers.

Drones do not have stingers (so those bee stings you get are from the females) and they cannot collect nectar or pollen. They also cannot build wax comb.

During the winter, the drones are kicked out of the hive because they are a drain on resources. The drones will die of cold or starvation. The male drones sole purpose is to fertilize the queen's eggs.

### **How many species of bees make honey?**

Worldwide, there are an estimated 20,000 species of bees. However, how many of those actually make the honey we enjoy in our tea and on our [homemade granola](#)?

How many bees are there in the world? The answer might surprise you... Did you know that out of all the species of honeybees only ONE produces honey?

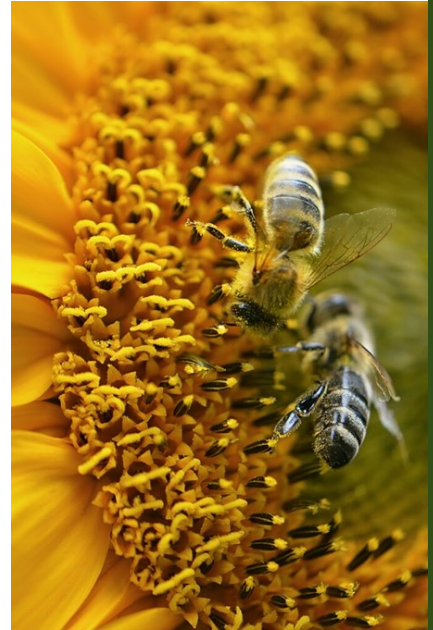
Truly astounding. There is **only one species** of bee that makes honey, and that is the European honey bee. This species was introduced to North America in the 1600s, and they are the ones that we see today.

While there are other species of bees in North America, they do not make honey like the European honey bee. Bumble bees, mason bees, and many other types of bees are common in North America, and they are pollinators, but they do not make honey.

### **Honey bees vs Native Bees: What's the difference?**

While honeybees are awesome since they give us delicious honey, there are a lot of different bee species out there in our yards. Honeybees came from Europe oh so long ago. So, while those honey bees live here NOW, they are not actually native bees.

In North America, we have what are called native bees. This basically means that they are amazing insects that have been here as far back as humans can remember. Or record in our written records.



Native bees include bumble bees, carpenter bees, leaf cutter bees, and mason bees. Native bees don't make honey like the European honey bee, but they are amazing pollinators.

So, remember that just because they don't spend their whole life making honey, native bees are incredibly important to help plants survive and produce fruit and other crops for us to eat.

## Honey Bee Decline

What is the biggest problem for bees? That is a complicated question but most of it comes down to humans, sadly.

Humans have changed the landscape so much that it is hard for bees to find food. We have also introduced a lot of insecticides and pesticides that are harmful to bees.

[Climate change](#) is also making it harder for bees to survive because they need a specific temperature to make honey.

How badly are bees endangered? The [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN) lists 16 species of bees as vulnerable, 18 as endangered, and 9 as critically endangered globally. That doesn't sound good.

The vast majority of bees can't be replaced by just building hives for them. And the number of beekeepers has also declined significantly. The number of managed honey bee colonies in the US has been declining since the 1940s.

In fact, from 1947 to 2005, the number of managed honey bee colonies in the US decreased by 60%. So, things aren't looking good for this very vital little social insect.

## What can homeowners do to protect pollinators like bees?

So, as a homeowner, what can you do to help honey bees thrive in your little neck of the woods? Plant a bee-friendly garden! This is probably the best thing you can do to help pollinators.

Bees need two things: food and shelter. By [planting a bee-friendly garden](#), you can provide both of those things. But, it doesn't stop there. Here is a **list of 10 action items** that YOU can do this spring to save the bees:

### Plant a Bee Garden

The best thing you can do to help pollinators is to plant a bee garden. By planting flowers that bees like, you can provide them with the food they need to survive. Make sure to include a variety of plant species in your garden so that the bees have something to eat throughout the growing season.

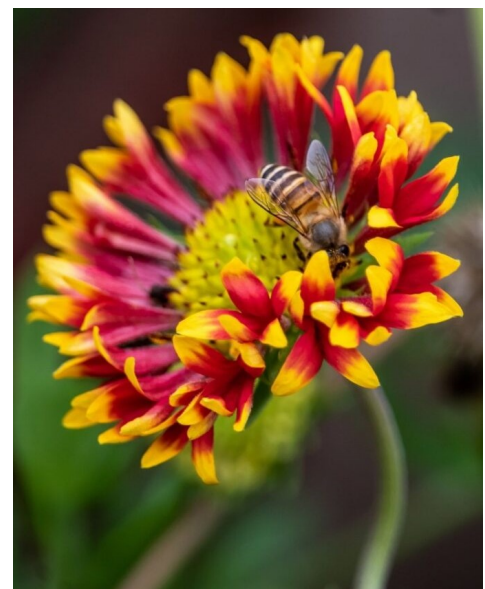
Check out my post about [perennial plants that attract pollinators](#). And if you love blue flowers as much as honeybees do, here are a few blue flowering plants to add to your pollinator garden:

- 'Blue Giant' glory-of-the-snow (*Chionodoxa forbesii*)
- 'Blue Pearl' crocus (*Crocus chrysanthus*)
- Blue globe allium (*Allium caeruleum*)
- Borage (*Borago officinalis*)
- 'Blue Glow' globe thistle (*Echinops bannaticus*)
- Bachelor's button (*Centaurea cyanus*)
- 'Black and Blue' salvia (*Salvia guaranitica*)
- 'First Choice' bluebeard (*Caryopteris x clandonensis*)

### Go Chemical-Free for Bees

Another way to help pollinators is to avoid using chemicals in your yard and garden. This includes insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides. Many of these products are toxic to bees and other pollinators. As honey bees collect pollen, they are exposed to every chemical you use on your lawn. If you must use them, do so at night when the bees are not active. And always follow the directions on the label.

If you are looking for an alternative to chemicals, consider using diatomaceous earth, neem oil, or [beneficial insects](#). Read my post about [how to use diatomaceous earth safely](#) before you start.



## Join a Global Movement to Help the Bees

There are many organizations working to save the bees. One way you can help is by joining one of these organizations or supporting their efforts.

Here are a few organizations that are doing great work to help pollinators:

- The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
- Pollinator Partnership
- Friends of the Earth
- The Honey Bee Conservancy
- Plant with Pollinators in Mind

## Plant Trees for Bees

Trees are an important part of the ecosystem and honey bees actually love tree flowers.

When you plant trees, make sure to include a variety of species. This will provide the bees with the food they need throughout the year.

You can also help by planting native trees. Native trees are adapted to the local climate and provide the bees with the food they need. They tend to be healthier and more resistant to local disease than non native trees.

Check out the [Arbor Day Foundation](#) for a list of bee-friendly tree species.

## Create a Bee Bath

Bees need water to survive. You can help by creating a bee bath in your yard.

A bee bath is simply a shallow dish of water that is easy for bees to access. Make sure to include some rocks or sticks for the bees to land on.

You can also plant native plants near your bee bath. This will provide the bees with a place to drink and a place to find food. Check out my [honeybee watering station](#) for an easy DIY bee bath tutorial.

## Leave Some Areas Wild

Bees need a place to nest and build their hives. You can help by leaving some areas of your yard wild. This means avoiding the urge to tidy up every last weed. Instead, let some areas grow wild. This will provide the bees with the shelter they need. And hey, less yard work for you, right?

## Build Homes for Native Bees

There are many species of native bees in North America. You can help these bees by providing them with a place to nest. You can build a bee house or [buy one online](#). Make sure to place your bee house in a sunny spot and away from predators like birds. Check out my post about [how to make a mason bee house](#) for more information about building a bee house for your yard.

## Teach Tomorrow's Bee Stewards

One of the best things you can do to help pollinators is to teach others about them. You can start by teaching your family and friends about the importance of bees. Then, you can reach out to your community and share what you have learned.

There are many ways to get involved with bee education. You can give a presentation at your local library, start a bee club for kids, or write articles like this one. You can also volunteer with organizations like The Bee Conservancy or The Xerces Society. These organizations offer many opportunities to get involved with pollinator education and conservation.

No matter what you do, make sure to spread the word about the importance of bees. We need to work together to save these important pollinators. Check out a few of these cute [books for kids about honeybees](#).





## Sponsor a Beehive

If you really want to help the bees, you can sponsor a beehive. Hives can cost upwards of \$300. By sponsoring a hive, you are providing the bees with a safe place to live and pollinate. You can find beehives for sale online (check out this [beehive box starter kit](#)) or at your local beekeeping store if your family wants to learn how to be beekeepers. If beekeeping isn't your thing, check out [The Bee Conservancy](#) and make a donation to sponsor a hive.

## Protect the Planet

Climate change and habitat destruction are major factors causing the collapse of honeybee populations. You can help by doing your part to [protect the environment](#). This means [reducing your carbon footprint](#), recycling, and [using less water](#). (Check out my [recycling resources](#) to get started!)

You can also help by supporting organizations that are working to protect the environment. Check out my Etsy store for [environment worksheets for kids](#) to encourage a new generation of climate warriors.

## Host a Fundraiser

One way to raise money for bee conservation is to host a fundraiser. You can do this by hosting a bake sale, car wash, or [yard sale](#). You can also ask your family and friends to make donations to your chosen organization.

Another great way to raise money is to hold a raffle. You can ask local businesses to donate items for your raffle. Then, sell tickets and give the money to your chosen organization. You can also host an online fundraiser. There are many platforms that you can use, such as GoFundMe or Crowdrise.

No matter how you choose to fundraise, make sure to choose a reputable organization that is working to save bees.

## Support Organic Farmers

You can also help protect honey bees by [supporting organic farmers](#). When you buy [organic food](#), you are helping to reduce the use of pesticides. You can also write to your local representatives and ask them to support bills that ban the use of bee-killing pesticides.

We need to work together to protect bees from becoming extinct. By making small changes in our everyday lives, we can make a big difference for these important pollinators.

## Support Local Beekeepers and Organizations

There are many local beekeepers and organizations working to save bees. You can support them by buying their honey, joining their programs, or making donations. You can also volunteer your time to help with their efforts. Many beekeepers and organizations need help with education, fundraising, and event planning.

If you want to get involved with local efforts to save bees, reach out to your local beekeepers and organizations. They will be more than happy to provide you with information about how you can help.

## More Pollinator Support Reading

As you can see, there are many ways that you can help save honey bees. By doing your part, bee pollination will continue (hopefully!) forever. Here are a few more articles about bees you might want to read:

- [Honey Gift Ideas](#): The more people who enjoy honey, the higher the demand and the more likely it is that beekeeping becomes a profitable hobby. Vote with your dollar!
- [Growing Sunflowers](#): Sunflowers are not only a great source of food for bees, they also produce food for humans!
- [How to avoid bee stings](#): While we want lots of bees in the backyard, their stings are not so fun. Here are some tips on how to avoid being stung by a bee.

Plant one flower this spring. Choose native plants that thrive without pesticides. Educate children about how pollination works and why bees are vital to our world food supply. Hand them a piece of fruit and make sure they know where it came from.

So, what do honeybees DO all day? A whole lot! Many crops only exist thanks to the help of these busy little insects. Do your part this spring to protect our food sources and these complex, fascinating insects.



# Notable Dates and Birthdays

A warm birthday wish to our members with April birthdays!

## April

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| * DeeDee B. | * Marilyn R. |
| * Kathie C. | * Jon T.     |
| * Diane C.  | * Kathy T.   |
| * Jenny C.  |              |
| * Rich D.   |              |



## Upcoming meetings and club activities:

### April

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    | 1  | 2  |
| 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

|           |                                                                      |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2</b>  | Yard Sale (9 am - 3 pm)                                              |
| <b>5</b>  | Garden Get-Together, air plant holders (10 am)                       |
| <b>5</b>  | GCUK Workday (9-11 am)                                               |
| <b>12</b> | GCUK Board Meeting (10 am)                                           |
| <b>16</b> | Workday at REEF (10-11 am) followed by workday at GCUK (11 am-12 pm) |
| <b>19</b> | GCUK General Membership Meeting (11 am)                              |
| <b>19</b> | Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)                        |
| <b>20</b> | Master Gardener Plant Clinic (9 am - 12 pm)                          |
| <b>28</b> | Field trip to UF Tropical Research & Ed. Center                      |

### May

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |

|           |                                                                                                 |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3</b>  | GCUK Workday (9-11 am)                                                                          |
| <b>10</b> | GCUK Board Meeting (10 am)                                                                      |
| <b>17</b> | GCUK General Membership Meeting and Pot Luck (11 am) and installation ceremony for new officers |
| <b>17</b> | Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)                                                   |
| <b>18</b> | Master Gardener Plant Clinic (9 am - 12 pm)                                                     |
| <b>22</b> | Workday at REEF (10-11 am) followed by workday at GCUK (11 am-12 pm)                            |

## Looking Forward...

- **Board** meetings at 10 am on May 10
- **General Membership** meetings on Apr 19, May 17. Meetings begin at 11 am; doors open at 10 am for social time.
- **Special Events:** April 28 Field Trip to UF Tropical Research & Education Center, 8 am—noon , then lunch.