

## Bees for Food Security

### Honey is a natural sweetener

can be consumed directly  
can be added into food recipes.  
loaded with antioxidants, enzymes, and vitamins that can benefit your health.

### Health benefits

Helps fight infections  
Boosts immune system  
Promotes healthy digestion

### Medical uses

Honey has been used since ancient times for medicinal purposes, including:-  
its ability to help treat colds, coughs, flu, sore throats, wounds, burns, cuts, scrapes, bruises, rashes, insect bites, sunburns, skin conditions

### What can you do?

Plant bee friendly plants  
Avoid use of harmful pesticides.  
Provide shallow dishes of water on hot days  
Buy environmentally friendly food  
Speak out about destruction of habitat

On hot summer days it's not uncommon to see dozens of bees around our birdbath. We have several fruit trees and enjoy gardening. We like to grow some of our food so we planted flowers and vegetables in amongst the trees. We toyed with the idea of buying a bee hive and discovered that friends living nearby have bees and harvested an amazing amount of honey this year.

The story of bees is not quite so rosy everywhere. Bee populations are declining because of land clearing, destruction of habitat, use of pesticides, and pests and diseases. You may have heard of the Varroa mite, a devastating parasite of European Honey bees, which has caused much concern for Australian scientists and beekeepers. The mite was discovered in NSW in 2022, and after toxic baiting programs and destruction of hives, it was decided that eradication was not achievable and all baiting ceased. A National Management Plan has been put in place. The Varroa mites are not harmful to native bees but the after-effects of the baiting program may continue to impact native bee populations for some time.

It goes without saying that we need bees as they help to pollinate most of the crops we eat and many that feed farm animals, benefitting nearly two-thirds of Australia's agricultural production. Around 2,000 species of native bee are found in Australia and are essential for continued biodiversity. Native bees evolved with our unique native flora and some plants can only be pollinated by a particular species of bee, so if that bee species dies, so too will the plant.

World Bee Day is on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024. The main purpose of World Bee Day is to spread awareness of the significance of bees and other pollinators for our survival. Will you take this opportunity to learn more about bees, talk about bees, encourage the creation of bee-friendly environments and help to safeguard our food security?

Susan Skowronski  
Social Issues & Action Coordinator

[www.worldbeeday.org.au](http://www.worldbeeday.org.au)

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/emergencies/biosecurity/current-situation/varroa-mite-emergency-response](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/emergencies/biosecurity/current-situation/varroa-mite-emergency-response)

**Gracious words are like a honeycomb,  
sweetness to the soul and health to the body.** Proverbs 16:24

