

## Bee Colony Collapse Disorder

In the winter of 2006 across the globe... honey bees started to disappear.

35 states in the US were affected as well as Europe and S. America. There is a global crisis known as COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER.

Many of the US beekeepers lost as much as 70% of their bees.

We depend on bees to pollinate  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all plants includes fruit & vegetables.

Other pollinators are also dwindling due to loss of habitat and pesticides.

Reasons given are considered to be an accumulation of 3 factors:

1. A virus that is not dissimilar to the aids virus in that it leaves the bees highly susceptible to fungal growth within the bee
2. Malnutrition caused by using bees on one crop at a time to increase crop yields for farmers.
3. Pesticides..... cause
  - a. Loss of appetite
  - b. Loss of memory....can't find their way back to the hive
  - c. Loss of ability to learn.....can't pick up signals from returning bees to locate food source.

In South Szechwan province in China they lost all of their bees due to pesticides. The whole area is economically dependent on pear crops. They have had to pollinate by hand.

Here in the US pollinating by people would cost billions of dollars. What would that do to the price of our produce? And what would happen to those who could not afford it?

We all need to be mindful of all chemicals and content of products we are using in our gardens.

You can get a full account on DVD from PBS.Org ...about \$20.