

# Honeybees Are Vanishing

You may wish that honeybees would disappear when you see one outdoors in your yard or garden. But lots of honeybees *are* disappearing. Scientists don't know why -- and they are very worried because bees help to grow many flowers, fruits, vegetables, and nuts.



Since last October, more than one-third of honeybees in the United States -- that's *billions* of bees -- left their beehives and vanished. Honeybees have disappeared from hives in Canada, Brazil, and Europe too.

Honeybees are important because they spread pollen from flower to flower. Pollen is a powder that helps trees and plants grow vegetables and fruits. If there are no bees to spread pollen, experts are afraid that a lot of the food we eat will not be able to grow.

Farmers don't just *hope* bees come along to pollinate their plants. Many farmers buy or rent beehives to put in their fields so bees will pollinate their crops. Hives are shipped to the farmers' fields. They often travel many miles by truck.

## **NEWS WORD BOX**

vanish    disappear  
population    pollinate  
chemicals    disease

Scientists are starting to think that a disease or an insect may be causing the honeybees to disappear.

Others say chemicals used on plants might harm the bees. The chemicals might cause bees to forget how to get to their hives. Or maybe the bees are dying of stress from the long trips they take on trucks. Some beehives are shipped across country as many as five times each year.

Experts are taking samples from many hives that have been harmed. They will study the samples to see if they can learn the real cause behind the bees' disappearing act.

## **MORE FACTS ABOUT HONEYBEES**

- Honeybees pollinate more than 90 of the flowering crops in the U.S. that we like to eat. Those crops include apples, nuts, soybeans, broccoli, celery, squash, citrus fruits, melons, and cucumbers.

## **THINK ABOUT THE NEWS**

What if honeybees' hives keep dying?  
Make a list of ways that this problem could affect you.