

THE *Good Earth* DIGEST

FOOD CO-OP



Summer 2015

The Buzz: Bees are Irreplaceable

by Natalie M. Rotunda

Bees. Step on one in your back yard while barefoot and you'll likely send up a cry of pain.

But, just before the bottom of your foot connected with the little creature buzzing around searching for nectar, he'd been working hard for you and me.

Fact is, bees pollinate a great number of the foods we hold dear for our own good health and sweet enjoyment. Botanists have known this forever: without bees, mankind will perish.

In the mid-1990s, bees became victim to a sinister turn of events. At first, the cause mystified scientists. The elephant in the hive later became known as Colony Collapse Disorder.

This bee-decimating phenomenon is likely caused by a variety of interacting factors, including pathogens, loss of habitat and increased exposure to pesticides everywhere, from farm fields to home lawns, and beyond.

Since there is no government intervention at present to help bees regain their once-considerable population, bee-appreciating activists around the globe have stepped up to spread the word with posters, such as this one:

You'll Miss Us When We're Gone:

Apples, almonds, blueberries, cherries, cukes, onions, grapefruit, oranges, pumpkins, avocados.

Those 10 crops are staples for increasing numbers of health-conscious people, most finding their way onto at least one list of "super-foods" deemed to be vital for good health.

Actually, more crops than these are at

risk—one-third of all crops, in fact, not to mention 100 flowering food crops. To state the obvious, the work bees perform for us is irreplaceable. So, save the bees!



Bee-protecting, proactive steps we can take...

Once our mindset moves away from viewing bees as backyard pests and into appreciating their incomparable gifts to us, growing numbers of us want to do something to protect and save our pollinators. These suggestions will take some effort to implement, but will reap so many benefits for everyone, bees included.

- **Forego the use of chemicals** to fertilize or otherwise maintain your lawn. In particular, neonicotinoids are highly toxic to bees. Instead, use pesticide-free ways to fertilize your garden. Check with Good Earth staff to find methods you're comfortable using.
- **Serve bees a little drinking water.** Surprised? Just like birds, bees need to refresh themselves with cool drafts of water from time to

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Manager's Note

by Noel Ashcroft

Summer is in the air and the smells of fire pits and grills beckon us all to finally get outside and enjoy what Minnesota has to offer.

I know our household loves this time of the year, with only a few bugs and the crisp night air.

Our minds instantly go to meat on the grill, and fortunately, the Good Earth Food Co-op has some of the best steaks, pork, and sausage available in the Midwest.

Meat from some of our favorite farms like DCBL Acres of Avon, whose farm is certified organic and their strict policies of not spraying fields for weeds and thistles, hand digging and burning the weeds, as well as never feeding their herd any hay or grains planted with GMO Seeds. The difference is happy, not stressed animals, and the proof is in the unbeatable taste.

Fox Farm of Browerville, MN is another fine example of pork raised naturally. Sows are not confined in farrowing crates, open hoop barns provide fresh air and sunshine, making a very comfortable environment. No antibiotics or animal by-products are used, and the family raise and grind their feed using non-GMO seed.

Also, having their own processing facility means the hogs are not stressed by being trucked long distances, and this reflects in the great flavor the Fox family hogs have obtained.

So, if you are like us, fire up your grill and be sure to check out these great offerings from the Good Earth Food Co-op, where I am sure you will be pleased with your choices.