



National Pollinator Defense Fund
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Pesticides and Bee Mortality in Florida Citrus

In early March the Florida citrus groves experienced an acute foliar poisoning that resulted in severely damaged colonies. Oranges had an early bloom this year, and were still blooming near the end of April. One beekeeper's bees suffered due to the drift application of Montana 2F from a neighboring grove. 1000-1500 colonies were killed, while 10,000-13,000 colonies suffered severe damage. Queen failures are being observed as of the end of April.

Citrus trees were sprayed with an insecticide during the bloom, while bees were actively foraging. Reports from the field state Montana 2F insecticide was applied during daylight hours to the citrus bloom, with jugs of Montana visible in the field. The foliar application directions for citrus as stated on Montana 2F's label clearly states, "Do not apply during bloom or within 10 days prior to bloom or when bees are actively foraging." (pg. 30, Montana 2F label, Rotam North America, Inc.)

More

EPA region 4 has inquired concerning this recent incident. The Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for Montana 2F state, “Harmful to honeybees by direct contact, but no problems expected when not sprayed into flowering crop or when used as a seed treatment.” (pg. 3, Material Safety Data Sheet, Montana 2F) In that one sentence from the MSDS, “. . . but no problems when not sprayed into flowering crop . . .” the directions are confusing. The EPA has no definitions for the label terms. To date, the EPA will not provide definitions when the definitions have been requested repeatedly over several decades. Beekeepers across the U.S. have been working with the EPA to make labels readable, understandable, and comprehensible to all who need to read them. It is especially important to understand a product label so the use or restrictions are not violated, and that no one is harmed: the applicator, the grower, the beekeeper, the bees, and the environment.

April 23, 2013 a meeting was held with beekeepers and growers where they have all agreed to work toward a solution.

The National Pollinator Defense Fund is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to defend managed, and native pollinators vital to a sustainable and affordable food supply from the adverse impacts of pesticides. For more information contact us at www.pollinatordefense.org.