



Pollinator Stewardship Council

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Florida Lost Twenty Percent of Honey Bee Colonies

A Miami, Florida CBS local story recently claimed a 145 percent *increase* of Florida's managed honey bee colonies. Talking with beekeepers in Florida, and reviewing the Bee Informed Partnership's survey of managed bee colonies that claim is unfounded.

According to the Bee Informed Partnership's annual loss survey, Florida experienced a 20.65 percent loss of honey bees over the 2014-2015 winter. Beekeepers in Florida state they are not keeping bees in citrus due to foliar, soil drenches, and trunk injections of neonicotinoid pesticides. The bee losses suffered are just too costly for beekeepers. (include photo of Bob Y's bee kills in citrus)

Florida does experience fluctuations in the total number of managed bee colonies in the state, simply due to its climate and blooming plants. Beekeepers from surrounding states will move bee hives to Florida, to take advantage of the blooming Brazilian peppers to create a honey crop. Beekeepers will move their bees around states and across states to benefit from a nectar flow on plants, to produce specific honeys such as clover, buckwheat, or Brazilian pepper. Once the bloom is off the plant, the beekeeper will move their honey bees to another location in search of food for their bees.

The Pollinator Stewardship Council's mission is to defend managed and native pollinators vital to a sustainable and affordable food supply from the adverse impact of pesticides.

The Pollinator Stewardship Council is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; all donations are tax deductible, EIN 46-0811836

Florida's climate also acts like a "hospice" for bees to recover from exposure to pesticides. Beekeepers will utilize Florida's climate to breed honey bees. The high losses of bees experienced across the nation makes Florida a good place to breed bees. With annual losses nationally of 50% of honey bees, the beekeeping industry must breed double the amount of honey bees simply to maintain the status quo of 2.5 million colonies.

When honey bee colonies move around the country, they get counted in their home state, as well as the state they are visiting. We need to get better at counting honey bee colonies so as not to give a false sense of the health and status of honey bees.

30

<http://miami.cbslocal.com/2015/05/25/floridas-bee-colonies-on-the-rise-thanks-to-new-program/>
<http://bip2.beeinformed.org/geo/>

Bee kill due to neonicotinoids on Florida beekeeper's property surrounded by citrus.



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