Pollinator News

Walmart and True Value to phase out bee-killing pesticides while Ace Hardware lags behind

Posted May. 3, 2017 / by: Erin Jensen

Garden retailers nearly unanimous in rejecting bee-killing pesticides

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Friends of the Earth and its allies announced a major advancement in their fight to protect essential pollinator populations. Walmart (NYSE: WMT) and True Value have decided to eliminate neonicotinoid pesticides, a leading driver of global bee declines, from company garden retail supply chains. This follows an ongoing campaign by Friends of the Earth and allies urging garden retailers, including True Value and Walmart, to stop selling plants treated with neonicotinoids and remove products containing them from store shelves.

In an email to Friends of the Earth, Walmart confirmed that its growers have eliminated neonics from approximately 80 percent of its garden plants. Walmart has also eliminated neonicotinoids in almost all its off-the-shelf gardening products. True Value announced (http://webiva-downtown.s3.amazonaws.com/877/57/7/10216/TrueValueStatement_Letters.pdf) that it will phase out products that contain neonicotinoid pesticides by the spring of 2018 and that the company is working with its growing partners to remove neonicotinoids from its plants.

“This is a great day for bees and sends an important message that the market is listening to consumers and sound science in refusing to sell bee-killing pesticides,” said Tiffany Finck-Haynes, Food Futures Campaigner at Friends of the Earth U.S. “Friends of the Earth and our allies will continue to challenge Ace Hardware to eliminate these pesticides as quickly as possible to protect pollinators, people and the planet.”

Walmart and True Value join more than 110 retailers across the country, including Home Depot (NYSE: HD) and Lowe's (NYSE: LOW), that have made firm commitments to eliminate neonicotinoids. To date, Ace Hardware is the only leading garden retailer that has not made a strong commitment to eliminate neonicotinoids on both plants and off-the-shelf products.
“Ace Hardware needs to stop dragging its feet and immediately adopt a formal public policy to eliminate neonicotinoid pesticides from its plants and products,” said Lisa Archer, Food & Technology Program Director at Friends of the Earth U.S. “Given that 40 percent of invertebrate pollinators are on the brink of extinction, it is more important than ever that companies like Ace Hardware and food retailers phase-out pollinator-toxic pesticides to address the bee crisis and protect our environment.”

“Polling clearly shows that American consumers want corporate retailers to commit to eliminate neonics and the vast majority of retailers are listening by saying NO to neonics on their store shelves,” said Angus Wong, Campaign Manager at SumOfUs. “Given clear consumer preference and the hundreds of thousands of Americans that have signed petitions to Ace Hardware and Kroger, we call on these retailers to adopt formal policies to eliminate bee-killing pesticides from all stores nationwide.”

A study released by Friends of the Earth and Pesticide Research Institute in August 2016 revealed bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides in “bee-friendly” home garden plants sold at major retailers. The latest commitments from True Value, Walmart and Costco (NYSE: COST) show that the industry has moved even further to eliminate these pesticides since the release of the report.
Adopting a Hive Mentality

Guest writer, Wendy Mather

This is the second in a series of articles on Bee Audacious, the “collaborative working conference using dialogue to envision bold evidence-based ideas through which honey bees, other bees beekeepers and pollination managers could prosper” held in Marshal, CA December 11-13, 2016.

As Tom Seeley states in his paper on The 5 Habits of Highly Effective Hives, “colonies are remarkably complex, in many ways comparable to an animal brain, despite being individually quite simple. And every year, faced with the life-or-death problem of choosing a new home, honey bees stake everything on a process that includes collective fact-finding, vigorous debate, and consensus building. It is a democratic process that humans — especially office drones — might do well to emulate.”

Participants at Bee Audacious did emulate the hive mentality. One of our first tasks was to come together in small groups to discuss “the values we should bring to protecting bees, beekeeping and pollination services, and the actions that might arise from these values.”

These questions inspired some thoughtful answers:

- Humanity must reconsider how it values bees.
- There is diversity in beekeeping practices, but the commitment to bee health is the unifier. Let’s work together to support beekeepers, and find the common values among diverse stakeholders.
- Pride and responsibility in beekeeping husbandry leads to a clean honey crop, and respect and responsibility to all pollinators and beekeepers.
- Create a demand for sustainable agriculture; our current commercial beekeeping models are a product of systems management. Let’s move toward sustainability and help promote and effect consumer change.
- Develop an ecosystem health check index to influence consumer demand to drive change. Develop more incentives for expanding and protecting pollinator habitat.
- Redefine “Bees” to all pollinators and increase awareness of nature and the environment, which would help us to better understand how we consume, thereby increasing the value of beekeeping and honey.
- Determine the cultural values of our country regarding ecosystems. Adopt an indigenous approach and make bees sacred.
- Balance maintaining our stewardship to land and insects while respecting economic needs.
- Develop stewardship practices that engage communities with beekeepers and bee husbandry and gain a sense of interconnectedness.
- Address the socio-spiritual impact of coordinating messaging nationally, and globally address that pollinators are the key to sustaining our planet and us.
The enlightening exploration of the values that embody pollinator stewardship and the actions that would arise from those values inspired our “hive mentality” and fueled participants to strive for audacity and courage in the small break out groups throughout the rest of the conference.

The next article in this series will outline some audacious ideas from the thought leaders. Stay tuned!

Wendy had a couple of dozen hives in Ontario, Canada before she moved to Northern California 5 years ago. She keeps a couple of small apiaries in the foothills of the Sierra. Wendy has worked as a Honeybee Health Advisor and Research Trial and Education Coordinator for NOD Apiary Products, and is now an independent consultant for the North American beekeeping industry. Contact her via email wemather@gmail.com
Like other fruit plants, blueberries need pollinators, such as bees, to grow. Farmers are growing increasingly dependent on western honeybees, scientists say. But bumblebees are more active in poor weather and pollinate highbush blueberries more, so UF/IFAS researchers wanted to test bumblebees on a local blueberry farm. Bumblebees can boost blueberry yield by 70 percent, good news for Florida growers in the heart of their blueberry season, a University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences study shows. The news also accentuates the need for blueberry pollinators, said Joshua Campbell, a post-doctoral researcher in the UF/IFAS entomology and nematology department.

After caging bumblebee hives with highbush blueberry bushes, researchers found that 70 percent of the flowers produced blueberries, while less than 10 percent of those without bumblebee hives produced blueberries. That’s helpful news for blueberry growers, said Campbell, co-author of a new study published in the Journal of Environmental Entomology.

“We think our findings are very relevant for growers who are growing blueberries in greenhouses and high tunnels,” Campbell said.

Like other fruit plants, blueberries need pollinators, such as bees, to grow. Farmers are growing increasingly dependent on western honeybees, scientists say. But bumblebees are more active in poor weather and pollinate highbush blueberries more, so UF/IFAS researchers wanted to test bumblebees on a local blueberry farm. Thus, researchers conducted their experiment on a large commercial blueberry farm in North Florida and found good results.

Florida blueberry growers already use bumblebees on their farms, but until now, they lacked evidence to back the use of such bees on highbush blueberries, Campbell said. The Sunshine State only has five bumblebee species. But most are fairly common in central and northern Florida, Campbell said. Only one of these -- the type used in the UF/IFAS research -- can be managed and utilized to pollinate.

In order to obtain a good commercial yield, a grower would need to augment the bumblebee population by placing hives within their fields, Campbell said. The biggest chunk of Florida’s blueberry crop is grown in Alachua, Lake, Marion, Putnam and Sumter counties, an area that accounts for about 40 percent of the state blueberry acreage. Next in acreage is an area that includes Hernando, Hillsborough, Orange, Pasco and Polk counties. Because Florida blueberry production comes from early ripening varieties, Florida growers receive higher prices from April to May, when they are the main suppliers, according to a UF/IFAS Extension document, http://bit.ly/2ohUaeU. Or at http://www.newswise.com/articles/bumblebees-boost-blueberry-yield
Translocation of the neonicotinoid seed treatment clothianidin in maize
Adam Alford, Christian H. Krupke, Published: March 10, 2017,
https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0173836

Abstract
Neonicotinoid seed treatments, typically clothianidin or thiamethoxam, are routinely applied to >80% of maize (corn) seed grown in North America where they are marketed as a targeted pesticide delivery system. Despite this widespread use, the amount of compound translocated into plant tissue from the initial seed treatment to provide protection has not been reported. Our two year field study compared concentrations of clothianidin seed treatments in maize to that of maize without neonicotinoid seed treatments and found neonicotinoids present in root tissues up to 34 days post planting. Plant-bound clothianidin concentrations followed an exponential decay pattern with initially high values followed by a rapid decrease within the first ~20 days post planting. A maximum of 1.34% of the initial seed treatment was successfully recovered from plant tissues in both study years and a maximum of 0.26% was recovered from root tissue. Our findings show neonicotinoid seed treatments may provide protection from some early season secondary maize pests. However, the proportion of the neonicotinoid seed treatment clothianidin translocated into plant tissues throughout the growing season is low overall and this observation may provide a mechanism to explain reports of inconsistent efficacy of this pest management approach and increasing detections of environmental neonicotinoids. READ MORE at http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0173836
Our Outreach - April 2017

During April the Pollinator Stewardship Council began planning Ohio Pollinator Week in partnership with Scotts Foundation and Ohio State Beekeepers Association. Working with four destination venues in the state, Cleveland Botanical Garden, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Aullwood Audubon Farm, Krohn Conservatory a week of educational activities will be featured. The 2017 American Honey Queen will be in attendance at each event, including an advocacy day in the state capital. The Program Director, and Board member Zac Browning attended the Spring Honey Bee Health Coalition meeting to discuss future projects such as pollinator training modules for pesticide applicators, the release of a CAST paper moderated by Dr. Marla Spivak about the state of honey bee health, soybean best management practices to protect pollinators, and more. Working an average of 58.32 hours per week the Program Director gave one presentation in April to a beekeeping association, and provided referrals for:

- Provide mosquito control information to Pennsylvania contact
- provided honey bee health issue information to a report with the Christian Science Monitor
- Secure writer/reporter of the Bee Audacious workshop for PSC Newsletter
- Assist OH beekeeper with Pollinator Habitat info. with local DOT
- Provide Pollinator Habitat information to Kent Environmental Council
- Provide handouts to H.S. student for pollinator session
- Mail the last 15 laminated Quickguides to beekeepers; a total of 122 have been mailed, with 1,878 distributed at conferences and presentations
- Provide Richland County, OH beekeeper with pesticide info.
- Research farm worker educational materials for a beekeeper
- Provide input on state dept. of agriculture apiary rules for a state bee assn.
- talk with reporter at EE news
- talk with reporter at Swiss radio in Calif.; provide a referral to a researcher
- participate on MP3evaluation metrics sub-work group of PPDC conference calls
- collect a bee kill report
- advise media of PSC view of chlorpyrifos concerns
We are a member of the Honey Bee Health Coalition


HBHC Varroa videos:
- Varroa mite PSA - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4titRjZuOQ
- Video 1 - IPM - https://youtu.be/aFILPZ5KbgU
- Video 2, 3 - Sampling methods - https://youtu.be/IgPtT9FQxLc
- Video 4 - Essential oils - https://youtu.be/fsn0RurGz10
- Video 5 - Using Apivar - https://youtu.be/pCq_Pu1iFeo
- Video 6 - Using Apistan or Checkmite+ - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsbY1nuUREY
- Video 7 - Formic acid - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PK5BTjexSs
- Video 8 - Using HopGuard - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOlafuIBBf0&t=8s
- Video 9 - Using Oxalic Acid - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sp-9eD3Sgw
- Video 10 - Using sanitation, screen bottoms - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7Axpy5JVDc
- Video 11 - Using drone brood removal - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j17AStzxEgs
- Video 12 - Using requeening - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnPBIStvC60

Tools for Varroa Management http://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/varroa/
Quick Guide to Reporting A Bee Kill http://pollinatorstewardship.org/?page_id=3292
Beekeeper Guide http://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/tools-and-resources/#hm
Grower Guide http://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/tools-and-resources/#hm
The Bee Understanding Project-. View the first film at this link https://vimeo.com/149238870

SAVE THE DATE

Heartland Apicultural Society

2017 - Evansville, Indiana
www.heartlandbees.org

July 13-15, 2017
Seeds for spring flowers for honey bees!

Pollinator Stewardship Council has partnered with Ohio Prairie Nursery in support of pollinator habitat. You can get native seeds for eastern U.S. planting zones here. Select “Support our Cause” (http://www.ohioprairienursery.com/?ref=pollsteco) to view featured seed selections to benefit pollinators. A portion of sales generated from our website will help support our work.

Seeds for honey bees WEST of the Mississippi

To increase plant biodiversity, improve gardens yields, and make a positive difference for the future, plant for pollinators WEST of the Mississippi with bbseed. Go to their website and Plant For Pollinators! https://www.bbbeed.com/articles/plant-for-pollinators-project/

Betterbee Has Seeds for Pollinator Habitat

Betterbee has seven seed mix varieties benefitting pollinators at their website

http://www.betterbee.com/pc_combined_results.asp?tab=product&search_prod=(searchlike~p.sku~seeds|Or|searchlike~p.nm~seeds|Or|searchlike~p.search_terms~seeds|Or|searchlike~p.searchfield7~seeds)|Or|searchlike~p.child_rollup_search_terms~seeds|Or|searchlike~p.search_terms~seeds)&search_keyword=seeds

Planting forage for our bees is important; and beekeepers can lead by example!
We are member supported! The Pollinator Stewardship Council is a nonprofit organization; donations are tax deductible.

Old Mill Honey Co.
Foothill Honey Farms
Wind River Honey Co.
Miksa Honey Farms
California-Minnesota Honey Farms
Rick Smith
Bob McDonell
Samuel Hall
Headwaters Farm
Hiatt Honey, LLC
South Dakota Beekeepers Assn.
Bret Adee
Indian Run Apiary
California Apiaries, LLC
Harmony Honey Co.
Red-Headed Honey
Sunrise Feed & Supply
Kentucky State Beekeepers Association

Geauga County Beekeepers
http://www.geaugacountybeekpeakers.org/
Nature’s Own Designs Apiary Products
http://nodaobal.com/
Essex County Beekeepers’ Assn.
http://www.essexcountyybeekpeakers.org/index.shtml
Los Angeles County Beekeepers Assn.
http://www.lasangelescountyybeekpeakers.com/
Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Assn.
http://www.pastatebeekpeakers.org/
The Studio Digital
http://www.thestudioidigital.com/
Beekeeping Insurance Services
http://www.beekeepingins.com/

The Pollinator Stewardship Council

Sunshine Apiary

Miksa Honey Farms
Queens & Queen Cells (Florida)

Delta Bee Club

Beekeeping Insurance Services

Butterfly Builders

SMITH FARM

Hackenberg Apiaries
Butterfly Pavilion
https://www.butterflies.org/

A.H. Meyer & Sons, Inc.
http://www.ahmeyersandsons.com/

People and Pollinators Action Network
http://www.peopleandpollinators.org/

Seib's Hoosier Honey
http://www.seibshoosierhoney.com/

Strachan Apiaries
https://www.strachanbees.com/

Sunshine Apiary, Inc.
https://www.facebook.com/SunshineApiary/

Tennessee Beekeepers' Assn.
http://www.tnbeek.com/

Empire State Honey Producers Assn.
http://www.eshp.org/

Smith Farm Pure Honey
www.smithfarmspurehoney.com/

Randy Oliver
http://scientificbeekeeping.com/

Browning's Honey Co., Inc.
http://www.browningshoney.com/

Wilson County Beekeepers' Assn.
http://wilsoncountybeekeepers.org/

Hackenberg Apiaries
http://hackenbergapiaries.org/

Nashville Area Beekeepers' Assn.
http://nashbee.org/

Delta Bee Club
http://www.deltabeecub.org/

Colorado State Beekeepers' Assn.
http://coloradoxbeekers.org/

Heartland Agricultural Society
http://www.heartlandbees.org/

Portage County Beekeepers
http://www.portagecountybeekers.com/

Beekeepers of Middle Tennessee
http://bomtn.org/

Northern Kentucky Beekeepers' Assn.
http://www.nkybeekers.com/
Beekeepers Working for Beekeepers

The Board and Program Director are all beekeepers. We work to:

- Raise awareness about the adverse impact of pesticides on pollinators critical to the supply of food and the ecosystem.
- Provide advocacy, guidance, and tools to document the detrimental effect of pesticides on pollinators.
- Affect regulatory processes of pesticide risk assessment, label, and enforcement.