

# The Importance of Bees



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**HONEY BEE RESEARCH & EXTENSION LABORATORY**

How do bees do their jobs? Bees are social creatures with a hard work ethic. Ensuring their hive has enough food for the next generation, they are constantly on the move gathering pollen and nectar for their colony. Worker bees gather their food sources from many different plants.

When the bees land on a flower they attract a little bit of pollen on their negatively charged legs, carrying pollen with them to the next flower. Bees also pollinate many of the fruits humans eat.

Dr. Jamie Ellis, Gahan Endowed Professor of Entomology in the Entomology and Nematology Department at the University of Florida (UF) and director of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab (HBREL), works with his team to improve agriculture and the environment through science-based honey bee management practices.

“We are trying to address the sustainability of bee keeping and the health of bees through multifaceted teaching extension and research programs,” said Ellis.

There is much to learn about bees, and the HBREL team works together to collaborate on research, teaching and extension.

“Most of my entomology colleagues are scientist experts who work across disciplines on insects. Honey bee folks are often organism specialists who use lots of different sciences to better specifically understand the bees,” said Ellis.

The agricultural industry and global economy are heavily impacted by the bees.

**“There have been a lot of estimations out there with honey bees, the estimate I’m comfortable with is 10 to 20% of our food comes from the efforts of honey bees probably more when you include the other bees,”** described Ellis.

His work and partnerships with many others around the world are having a positive impact on honey bees and the future of the bee industry. Challenges like the Varroa Mite have plagued bee colonies. Describe what the mites do in more detail here. Ellis loves bees and wants to ensure a healthy successful future for them.



There are many ways we can contribute to the greater good of the honey bee. For example, limiting pesticides sprayed on plants can help save bees. Owning a hive at home can help increase the bee population.

Follow these links for more information about Ellis, and the work HBREL is doing to support the bee industry.

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