



# Honey Bee Research & Extension Lab

University of Florida

Extension Coordinator,  
**Amy Vu**



As the Extension Coordinator for the Honey Bee Research and Extension Lab (HBREL) for University

of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), Amy Vu oversees the lab's outreach, training, and public engagement alongside her colleagues. HBREL conducts research and training about honey bees and their major stressors.

Vu is passionate about honey bees, and she works to bring relevant and new research to the public about honey bees through programs like the UF/IFAS Master Beekeeper Program, UF/IFAS Bee College, the lab's "Two Bees in a Podcast", social media (@UFHoneyBeeLab), being a guest speaker and lecturer at events throughout Florida and the country, and more.

The HBREL conducts research, and Vu disseminates the research on many honey bee related topics. HBREL's current focus is on the

three major stressors to honey bees: Varroa, nutrition, and queen health "A mite called Varroa destructor feeds on the fat bodies of honey bees and transmit viruses," explains Vu.

Varroa is the number one threat to honey bees. Due to the infectious nature of the viruses the mites transmits, one infected bee can infect a multitude of others. If that isn't enough, the brutal physical damage the mites inflict on the bodies of the honey bees is also detrimental to their health.

Nutrition is another stressor the honey bees currently face. An accessible and well-balanced diet is important to bees just like it is to humans. Without a diverse base of pollen and nectar sources for bees to visit, bee health suffers.

The final stressor is the distress inflicted on queen bees. Vu said each hive is built of worker bees (females), drones (males), and the queen (female) bee. The queen bee is the only reproductive female bee. If the queen bee gets sick or perishes, the colony is quick to follow.

**"Bees are incredibly important for the pollinator services that they provide. Vast amounts of agricultural products rely on these services and without them, our agricultural and consumer industries would be drastically different," explains Vu.**

Because of the important pollinator services that bees provide, encouraging, informing, and motivating people to act is vital to HBREL's mission and Vu's work. She believes that it does not matter what stage of life you are in, where you live, or whether or not you own bees, each person can play a role to foster a more bee-friendly world.



## STREAMING SCIENCE