

## Bee activists attempt to save brunch

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Thousands urge Ace and True Value to remove bee-killing pesticides

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Over the month of August, more than 2,000 people across the country urged [Ace Hardware](http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/3a/8/6431/Ace_letter_follow-up_brunch.pdf) ([http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/3a/8/6431/Ace\\_letter\\_follow-up\\_brunch.pdf](http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/3a/8/6431/Ace_letter_follow-up_brunch.pdf)) and [True Value](http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/c9/4/6422/True_Value_letter_brunch.pdf) ([http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/c9/4/6422/True\\_Value\\_letter\\_brunch.pdf](http://webiva-downton.s3.amazonaws.com/877/c9/4/6422/True_Value_letter_brunch.pdf)) to “save brunch” and stop selling bee-killing pesticides. As part of a national month of action organized by Friends of the Earth and allies, bee activists held “brunches for bees” to educate their communities about the importance of protecting bees; customers visited Ace and True Value stores to urge them to commit to stop selling these pesticides. Participants also [photographed](http://www.flickr.com/photos/brunchforbees/) (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/brunchforbees/>) themselves with and without food pollinated by bees to highlight that without bees, some of our healthiest foods like almonds and watermelons could be in short supply.

“Retailers across the country are stepping up to the plate and eliminating bee-killing pesticides. Ace and True Value must listen to the science and consumer demand and follow their lead in protecting these essential pollinators,” said Tiffany Finck-Haynes, food futures campaigner at Friends of the Earth. “Nearly 70 percent of nursery growers have stopped using neonics or have partially phased them out, so it’s clear that supply is available. What are Ace and True Value waiting for?”

Thus far, Ace and True Value have failed to make any public commitments to protect bees by taking steps to eliminate plants and products that contain neonicotinoid pesticides, a leading driver of bee declines, from their stores. Ace Hardware, the largest retailer-owned hardware cooperative in the world, announced at the beginning of June it is willing to move away from products containing neonicotinoids, but has not responded to requests for dialogue or made any clear, time-bound public commitments to phase these pesticides.

“It’s time for Ace and True Value to recognize that neonics have no place in home gardens. There are better, non-toxic ways to manage pests than using a pesticide that works much like a nerve poison,” said Katherine Paul, associate director at Organic Consumers Association. “Conscious consumers want no part in supporting the widespread use of a pesticide whose devastating impact on bees is well-documented, and whose impact on humans has yet to be determined.”

“Millions of bees are dying off, with alarming consequences for our environment and our food supply. We rely on bees to pollinate everything from almonds to strawberries to the hay used to feed dairy cows. What happens if the bees disappear? It’s simple: No bees, no food. We call on Ace & True Value to do right by their customers and our planet and stop selling bee-killing pesticides,” said Sara Smith, staff attorney at Environment Texas.

“Our members deeply care about bee protection — that’s why over 60,000 people have signed petitions to Ace and True Value to stop selling neonics, and hundreds more signed up to host brunches. Our members represent thousands of Ace and True Value customers, and we’ll be watching closely to make sure they follow their competitors and protect the bees,” said Emma Pullman, lead campaign strategist at SumOfUs.org

In the past year, following a campaign by Friends of the Earth and allies, more than thirty nurseries, landscaping companies and retailers -- including [Home Depot \(/news/news-releases/2014-06--saving-bees-home-depot-bjs-wholesale-club-take-action-on-pesticides\)](/news/news-releases/2014-06--saving-bees-home-depot-bjs-wholesale-club-take-action-on-pesticides) (**NYSE:HD**) and [Lowe's \(/news/news-releases/2015-04-lowes-commits-to-protect-bees-and-pollinators\)](/news/news-releases/2015-04-lowes-commits-to-protect-bees-and-pollinators) (**NYSE:LOW**), the world's largest home improvement retailers, [Whole Foods \(/news/news-releases/2014-10-friends-of-the-earth-commends-whole-foods-first-step-into-the-fight-to-save-pollinators\)](/news/news-releases/2014-10-friends-of-the-earth-commends-whole-foods-first-step-into-the-fight-to-save-pollinators) (**NASDAQ: WFM**) (</news/news-releases/2014-10-friends-of-the-earth-commends-whole-foods-first-step-into-the-fight-to-save-pollinators>) and [BJ's Wholesale Club \(/system/storage/877/ba/5/4725/BJs\\_neonic\\_commitment.pdf\)](/system/storage/877/ba/5/4725/BJs_neonic_commitment.pdf) -- have taken steps to eliminate bee-killing pesticides from their stores. The UK's top garden retailers, including [Homebase, B&Q and Wickes \(http://www.foe.co.uk/news/bees\\_neonicotinoid\\_ban\\_38942\)](http://www.foe.co.uk/news/bees_neonicotinoid_ban_38942), have also stopped selling neonicotinoids. According to a recent [survey \(http://www.greenhousegrower.com/business-management/download-greenhouse-growers-2015-top-100-growers-whitepaper/\)](http://www.greenhousegrower.com/business-management/download-greenhouse-growers-2015-top-100-growers-whitepaper/) by Greenhouse Grower magazine, more than two-thirds of plant nurseries have either stopped using neonicotinoids or have started moving away from using these chemicals.

The body of science demonstrating that neonicotinoid pesticides harm bees and broader ecosystems continues to grow. At the end of August, the European Food and Safety Administration released its [findings \(http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/150826\)](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/150826) from research analyzing the impacts three neonicotinoid pesticides have on pollinators when applied in foliar sprays. EFSA found "high risks" for pollinators, from honey bees to solitary bees, from these sprays, matching earlier research into neonicotinoids applied in granules and seed treatments.

In addition, the U.S. Geological Survey recently [announced \(http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=4300#.VeDOb\\_IVhBc\)](http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=4300#.VeDOb_IVhBc) results from the first national-scale investigation of neonicotinoid insecticides in agricultural and urban settings and found neonicotinoids in more than half of streams sampled.

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**Expert contacts:**

Tiffany Finck-Haynes, (202) 222-0715, [tfinckhaynes@foe.org](mailto:tfinckhaynes@foe.org) (<mailto:tfinckhaynes@foe.org>) Katherine Paul, (207) 653-3090, [katherine@organicconsumers.org](mailto:katherine@organicconsumers.org) (<mailto:katherine@organicconsumers.org>) Sara Smith, (512) 479-9861, [sara@environmenttexas.org](mailto:sara@environmenttexas.org) (<mailto:sara@environmenttexas.org>) Emma Pullman, ( 778) 887-6776, [emma@sumofus.org](mailto:emma@sumofus.org) (<mailto:emma@sumofus.org>)

**Communications contact:** Kate Colwell, (202) 222-0744, [kcolwell@foe.org](mailto:kcolwell@foe.org) (<mailto:kcolwell@foe.org>)

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