

Pesticides In City Spaces

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National Honeybee Week has local bee enthusiasts abuzz with activity, canvassing neighborhoods, celebrating bees and asking the city of Eugene to stop using pesticides in public parks and other spaces. “We want to educate and empower ourselves to protect the bees because our government is refusing to do so, and that’s at the federal, state and local levels,” Lisa Arkin of Beyond Toxics says.

Arkin says that the most widely available chemicals for gardens and many crops are connected to colony collapse disorder (CCD), which has killed billions of honeybees over the past decade. That’s why Beyond Toxics is going door-to-door, asking Eugeneans to take the honeybee pledge to stop using pesticides. After they complete pledges for entire blocks, Arkin says, local beekeepers working with Beyond Toxics are hoping to help residents set up honeybee hives.

But getting the pledge is essential, Arkin says, because even very low levels of pesticides have significant impacts on bees. Not only are neurotoxins in products like Weed and Feed and Roundup carried back to hives, poisoning the colony, they also threaten the valuable agricultural economy. “Honeybees account for \$19 billion of the U.S. agricultural economy,” she says. “Without honeybees, our fruit trees, our veggies, all the things we need to sustain ourselves would be put at risk. We need bees, essentially, to keep our agricultural system going.”

Beyond Toxics’ Friends of Honeybees campaign, with support from Hummingbird Wholesale and Wintergreen Farm, is promoting bee health by asking Eugeneans to take the honeybee pledge to stop using pesticides. These pledges will be used to rally the city toward what Arkin says is the most responsible form of integrated pest management, using pesticides only in an emergency when the benefits outweigh the risks.

After spending the week on a public education mission (and a party at Hideaway Bakery), Arkin says, National Honeybee Day will include a final fundraiser and celebration 8:30 pm Saturday, Aug. 18, with Son Melao playing at Cozmic. Bring this flyer so your pizza can support the bees: <http://wkly.ws/1c8>

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