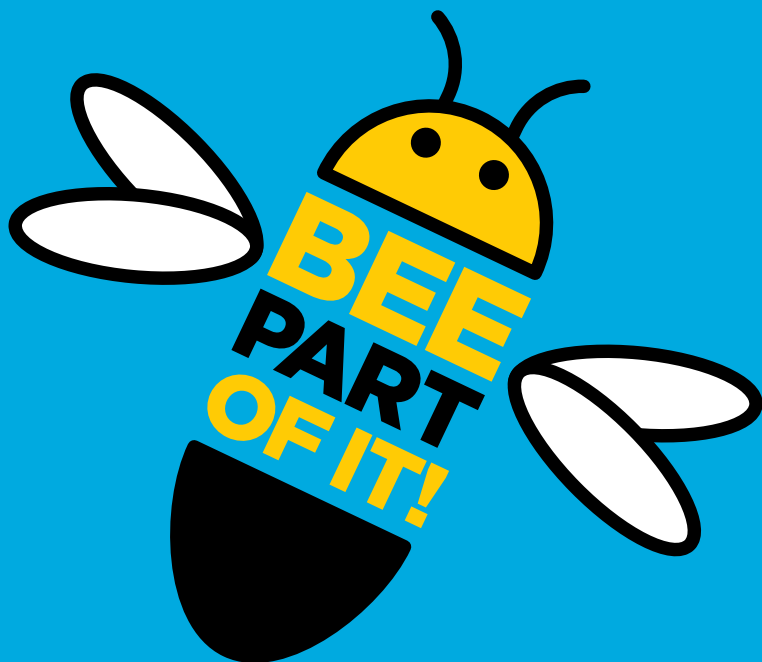


**BBC**

**LOCAL RADIO**

 **National Trust**



***Keeping Bees Buzzing***

## In a 'buzz' to help save the honey bee

Kate Humble,  
Springwatch on BBC Two



**The National Trust and BBC Local Radio are encouraging people to 'Bee Part Of It!' this summer with a campaign to help save the honey bee supported by Springwatch presenter Kate Humble.**

In the UK, the number of honey bee colonies halved between 1985-2005 due to changes in the environment, the growth of the harmful varroa mite and cold wet summers.

To help tackle the problem, BBC Local Radio and the National Trust have teamed up to launch 'Bee Part Of It!'. Over forty BBC local radio stations have adopted new hives at National Trust properties across the UK – homes for over two million bees, and the BBC in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have also joined the project.

Springwatch's Kate Humble says of the 'Bee Part Of It!' campaign: "I first got interested in bees when I was filming with a local beekeeper for Springwatch and realised that by becoming a beekeeper I could do something really tangible to help the fairly desperate situation that our bee population has found itself in. Most of our wild honey bees have died out and we, as humans, are very dependent on bees to pollinate food crops."

She continues: "To have bees visit you is like having nature's own expert team of gardeners working really hard for you as they help pollinate your vegetable patch, fruit trees, flowers – anything that depends on pollination. Having bees in your garden is a cause for celebration – invite them in!"

### I don't bee-lieve it!

- Honey bees have five eyes!
- Honey bees can carry half their weight in pollen
- One honey bee would need to fly the equivalent of twice around the world to produce a jar of honey
- Bees live in colonies of up to 70,000, with just one queen
- Honey bees do a waggle dance to show the other bees where the best sites are to collect nectar and pollen
- Bees have two pairs of wings which can beat at over 180 times per second
- 40% of the food we eat depends on plants being pollinated by insects, including bees
- One in three mouthfuls of food is produced with the help of bees
- Bees are worth £200 million to the British economy alone
- In a good year, a beehive can produce up to 100 jars (45kg) of honey!

## Why we need honey bees

**There are around 250 types of wild bee in this country, of which the honey bee is just one variety.**

Honey bees do a lot more than buzz around and produce honey. Honey bees are vital because they pollinate the majority of the fruit, vegetables and crops that end up on our plates including apples, strawberries and beans. Without the honey bee, our environment could change dramatically, as well as our food choices.

With honey bee numbers falling, we can all do something to help.

## How you can bee-friendly

- Plant nectar rich flowers in the garden such as forget-me-not, lavender and heather
- Grow bee-friendly fruit, vegetables and herbs including raspberries, courgettes, squash and thyme
- Don't use garden pesticides
- Choose organic fruit and vegetables
- Install a bee box in your garden
- Support beekeepers by buying local honey
- Train to become a beekeeper by joining your local beekeeping association. For more information visit: [www.bbka.org.uk](http://www.bbka.org.uk)



Images courtesy of Brian Cleckner,  
Sam Reed and Louise Brown

## What is a colony?

Honey bees live as colonies, huge 'families' with one queen, up to 50,000 sister worker bees and 200-300 male drone bees.

The queen is the mother of all the bees and remains in the hive after she's mated. In the spring she can lay up to 2,000 eggs a day. The queen can live for 3-5 years.

The worker bee goes through an apprenticeship of different tasks such as incubating eggs until it is ready to leave the hive to forage. Worker bees fly up to three miles, and forage for about 40 minutes to fill their honey stomach or pollen sacks. The pollen is for protein and the nectar for energy and conversion to honey. They also collect a substance called propolis from leaf buds to use as natural 'glue' around the hive.

For more information about Bee Part Of It and how you can be involved visit...

[www.bbc.co.uk/springwatch](http://www.bbc.co.uk/springwatch)

[www.facebook.com/bbcbeepartofit](https://www.facebook.com/bbcbeepartofit)

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/beepartofit](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/beepartofit)

Registered charity no. 203946

[www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com)

[www.flickr.com/groups/bbc\\_beeartofit](https://www.flickr.com/groups/bbc_beeartofit)

See the  
bees' a  
buzzin'  
on our  
beecam!

We have installed a 'bee-cam' in the hive at one of the National Trust properties, Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire. To see what's going on, and to find out more about the project, visit:

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/beepartofit](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/beepartofit)

If you require this information in alternative formats, please call 01793 817706 (standard network charges apply) or email [jeannette.heard@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:jeannette.heard@nationaltrust.org.uk)