

## WHY TO PLANT

Before organising the planting actions, it will probably be useful to find out why we need to plant flowers for bees. Here you can read some facts about bees and the negative results of their disappearance.

### 10 interesting facts about bees:

1. Bees are found on every continent except Antarctica.
2. Bees beat their wings approximately 200 times a second.
3. Honey bee is the only insect that produces food eaten by human beings.
4. There are about 20000 species of bees.
5. Bees communicate with each other with a special “dance” language.
6. Bees do not die if they sting other insects or animals, for example, a cow.
7. When born, the honey bee does not know how to produce honey. The younger bees are taught by more experienced ones.
8. A worker bee produces 1/12<sup>th</sup> teaspoon of honey in its lifetime.
9. Bees are cold-blooded creatures but they generate heat by vibrating their bodies.
10. The ancestors of bees were wasps.

### Value of bees

We all know the most obvious value of bees – they produce tasty honey. But they do a lot more than this. They pollinate about a third of all our food, among which are fruits, vegetables and grains. Bees pollinate 1500 different crops worldwide and 70 percent of all flowering plants. Therefore, natural ecosystems depend on them heavily as well. By pollinating crops bees contribute greatly to the economy.

### How are bees doing now?

Not so well. It is difficult to miss newsletters' headlines about the disappearance of bees. It got the name of *Colony collapse disorder (CCD)* which is characterised by large amounts of worker bees dying or abandoning the hives. This phenomenon was observed in many European countries and North America. If you want to discover more about the current bees' situation, you can find an updated report in the [section “Report about bees \(2017\)”](#).

### What are the reasons?

Nobody knows exactly why this is happening but there are several possible causes considered by scientists:

- malnutrition
- the use of neonicotinoids, insecticides used to protect plants from parasites;
- Varroa mites, the parasite which feeds on the body of the bee and bee larva;
- beekeeping practices, for example the use of antibiotics;
- combination of several factors.

### **What can we do?**

- Plant a bee-friendly garden
- Start a honeybee hive
- Support local beekeepers
- Spread the word

### **Why is planting important?**

When bumble bees live near a rich array of wildflowers, their chances of survival to the next year increase by up to four times. In particular, it helps to have a mix of plants that flower in both spring and summer.