

the Under-Bee by John Hall and Nikolas Liepins - Bee Kind MN

Do you like almonds, strawberries, or apples? Without bees, they wouldn't exist. One third of human food crops, including almonds, strawberries, apples, and more rely on bees. Currently, native bee populations are in a dangerously rapid decline. We're not talking about honeybees here, we're talking about wild bees.* Our native bees are native to here, the United States of America, while honeybees are globally distributed domesticated European bees. Native bees are facing problems such as urban food deserts, habitat loss, and pesticide use.

Unfortunately, while honeybees have beekeepers regularly tending to them, wild bees are often overlooked. They are left in the dust to deal with their own problems which have been mostly caused by humans; that's why we have founded Bee Kind MN. Our mission is to provide homes for declining wild bee populations in a sustainable way, and to share our knowledge with the world. We do this by encouraging the public to build wild bee houses, and by making the building instructions and other information readily available on our website (BeeKindMN.org). After meeting with the "bee branch" of the Sustainability Department at 3M, and continuing to collaborate with the University of Minnesota Bee Lab, Bee Squad and Frenatae Student Group, we are able to bring you the most up-to-date information in the bee world.

Saving the under-bees starts with you. The wild bees need you to help their cause, and like we said before, native bees don't get much attention. Very few people know that there are different kinds of bees. When you think of bees, the first thought that probably comes to mind is honey. Native bees do not produce honey, but they are able to pollinate many plants that the honeybee can not. By spreading the buzz about the importance of native bees, and the problems facing them, you can help to start a movement that will make a difference in the world. By building a bee house, planting a pollinator garden, refraining from using pesticides, and simply spreading the word, you can change the lives of our native bees. Together, we can make a difference and bring back the under-bees!

*The terms "wild bees," "native bees," and "solitary bees" will be used interchangeably throughout this article.