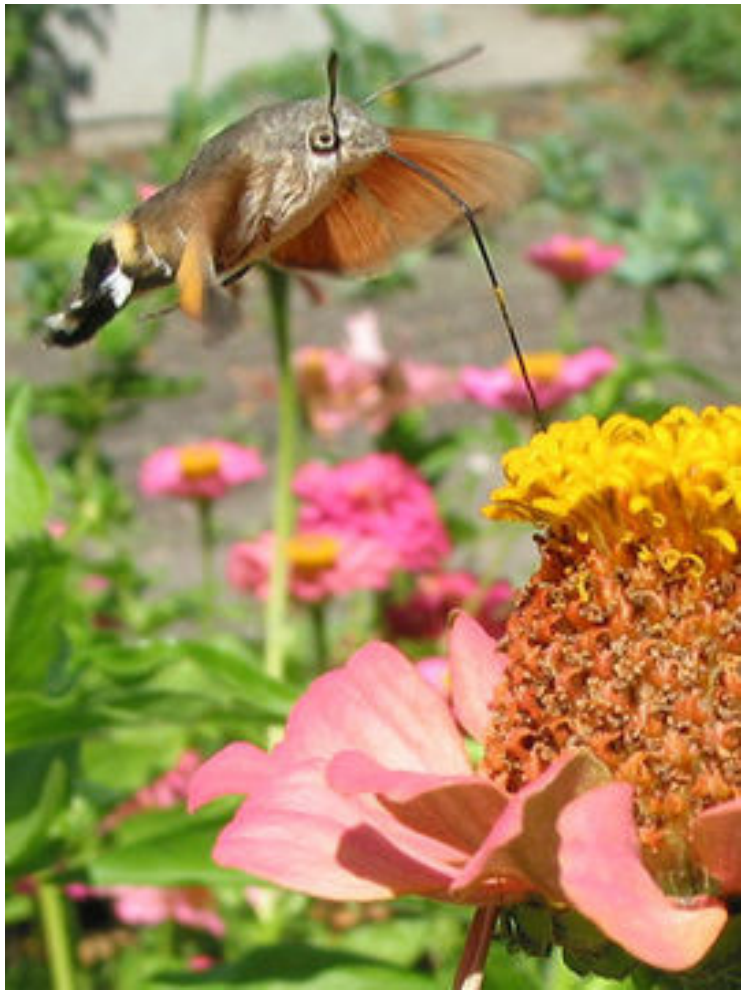
THE IMPORTANCE OF POLLINATORS

--BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES, MOTHS, BATS, AND ESPECIALLY BEES

FACTS ABOUT POLLINATORS

Plants use animals or the wind to help them with pollination.

Pollinators include birds, bats, butterflies, moths, and bees



You Tube--The Beauty of Pollination by Louie Schwartzberg 4:09 minutes

FACTS ABOUT POLLINATORS

Almond tree in bloom

Pollinators are responsible for the survival of 30% of the human food supply and 90% of our wild plants

Their purpose is to get food but accidentally they are pollinating the plants at the same time.

FOCUS ON BEES……

Bees pollinate about 1/6 of the flowering plants worldwide and approximately 400 different types of agricultural plants.

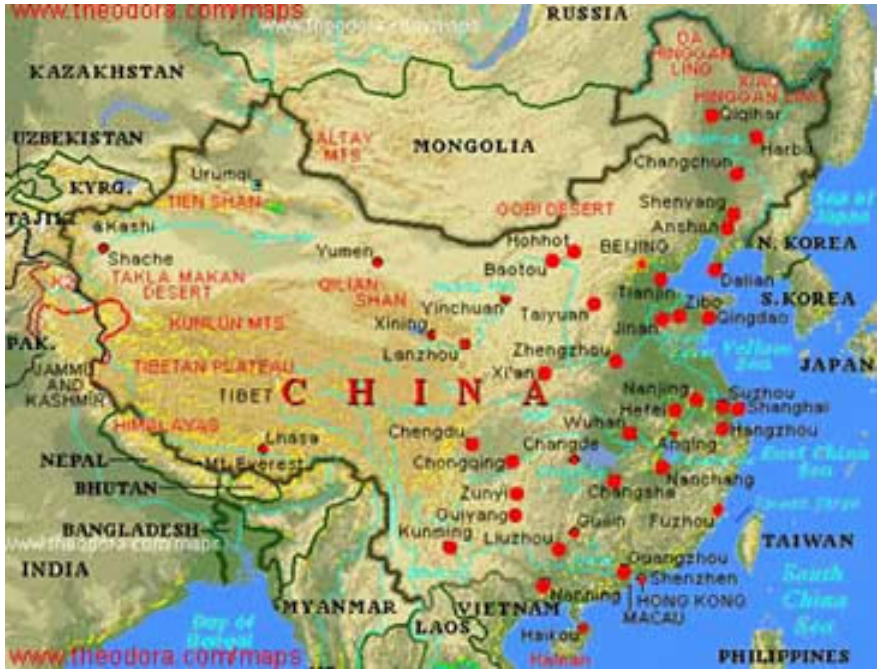
Some of the plants that need bees to pollinate: alfalfa, apple, apricot, blackberry, blueberry, cherry, clovers, cucumbers, muskmelon, cantaloupe, nectarine, peach, pear, persimmon, plum, pumpkin, raspberry, squash, sunflower, trefoil, watermelon, etc…

A STORY FROM CHINA...PART 1

In the 1990's farmers in China realized they could grow apples as a cash crop.

They cleared forests and planted apple trees and things were good but then something happened. The trees quit producing apples. 1999 was an especially bad year.

Problem: There were no bees around to pollinate the apple trees. Clearing the forests had eliminated the habitat the bees needed to survive



https://membracid.wordpress.com/2013/06/19/will-we-have-fruit-in-a-future-without-bees/

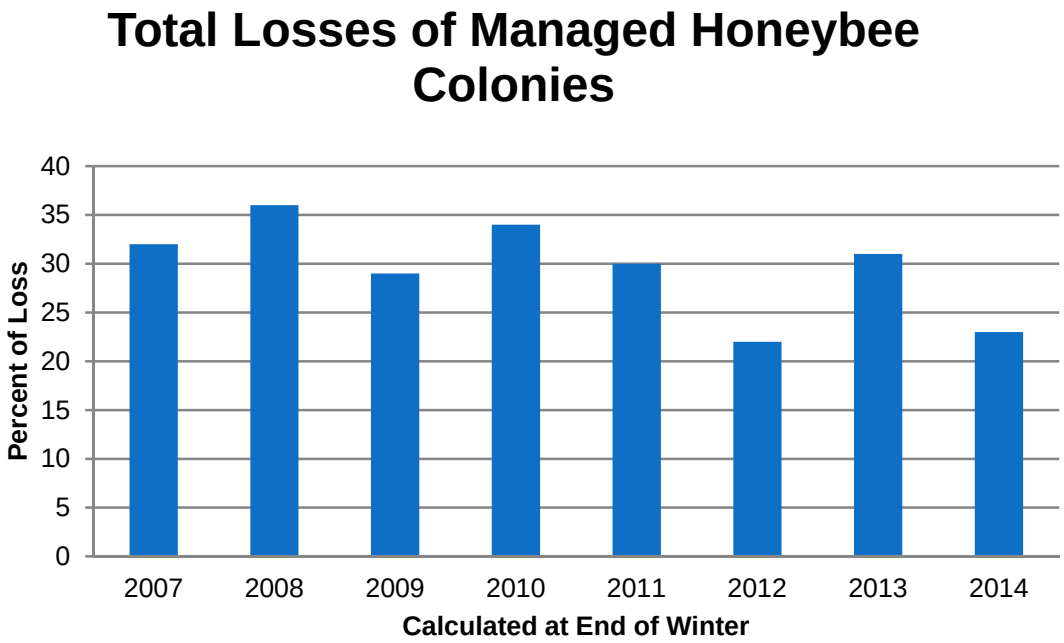
A STORY FROM CHINA....PART 2

Short-term solution: They had humans act as pollinators. A person can pollinate 5-10 trees a day. The humans were good pollinators but cost more than bees.

Long-term solution: Provide habitat for bees by planting native host trees. In 2011, bees are an important part of the population and hand pollination is rare.

PROBLEMS IN THE UNITED STATES WITH BEES...

In 2006, beekeepers were the first to notice that bees were dying off and alerted scientists. Bees were leaving the colonies and not returning. It was called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD).



WHY?? WE ARE STILL NOT SURE

Many theories or ideas:

Global Warming: flowers are blooming at a different time

Pesticides: pesticides are still being used that we know can harm bees

Habitat Loss: land development destroying wildlife habitat

Parasites: harmful mites

Or a combination of these ideas…

WHAT WE DO KNOW....

In nature, everything is connected. When one part of the food web is affected—it affects everything in the food web.

"According to the USDA, about one-third of the human diet comes from insect-pollinated plants, and the honey bee is responsible for 80 percent of that pollination."

We must take action to help pollinators survive or else our food supply will be threatened

REMEMBER

“Every third bite of food you take, thank a bee or other pollinator”.

Adapted from E. O. Wilson, Forgotten Pollinators, 1996