

NATIONAL HONEY BEE DAY



NJBA

Founded in 1902, *The New Jersey Beekeeper Association* was created to support Honeybees, statewide beekeepers, and the act AS well as importance of beekeeping. A non-profit organization based solely on volunteers, the NJBA has 10 branches located throughout the state and are intentional with making everyone feel welcome into their beekeeping community.

BEE MINDFUL

Bee stings are one of the most common outdoor hazards, often causing mild discomfort, swelling, and redness at the site of the sting. However, in individuals who have severe bee allergies, a simple bee sting can trigger an intense and even life-threatening reaction known as anaphylaxis. This reaction includes signs such as difficulty breathing, swelling, hives, and drop in blood pressure. Though bee stings are not the only reason for anaphylaxis, they are a leading cause. The Africanized honeybee, also known as the "killer bee" is the most aggressive and fatally stinging bee species, responsible for most bee-related deaths. This specific bee species is known to attack in larger numbers and go after perceived threats over long distances. Honeybees are also known to sting but typically will not do so unless defending themselves or their hive. Individuals with known life-threatening allergies should carry an epinephrine auto injector, while simpler at-home remedies can be used for smaller reactions and sting-site irritation.

Due to recorded hieroglyphics of bees and beekeeping, ancient Egyptians were believed to be the first people to use honey. These hieroglyphs are believed to highlight the role of honey in their spirituality and regular life. Unlike today's modern beekeeping hives, the Egyptians prioritized cylindrical wicker baskets, which would be transported along the Nile River during the seasonal blooming of flowers in upper and lower Egypt. Honey was used for medicine, in beauty products, as a religious offering, and even in the process of mummification.



Honey is known universally for being one of nature's 'Holy Grails'. The versatility of natural honey can provide good health, physical healing, a taste of sweetness, and so much more. But what about the little buzzing soldiers that work tirelessly to create this delicious Honey? National Honeybee Day is celebrated annually every third Saturday of August, this year falling on August 16th. During this unofficial holiday, we recognize the role of honeybees in pollination, the ecosystem, and the importance of their products such as honey and honey wax. This can also be seen as a time to acknowledge and bring awareness to our behavior as humans and how we can do better for our environment and for our little buzzin' buddies.

PURE HONEY

Did you know there was a difference between raw and pure honey? Though they both taste equally delicious, one is processed, and one is not. Raw honey is thick honey that comes straight from the hive and is only strained before being bottled, allowing it to keep its nutrients and enzymes. On the other hand, pure honey is more likely to be processed and heated, reducing most of its health benefits and making its texture more diluted. Buying local honey typically is best, considering locally made honey is typically kept raw and unfiltered. Buying local also helps support our farmers and beekeepers while also investing in the community's economy.

TINY TEACHERS

Honeybees can teach us a whole lot about teamwork, communication, and having a sense of balance with nature. Like humans in the workforce, each bee has a specific role that benefits the overall functionality of the hive, showing the power of teamwork and collective effort. Bees are also known to protect their own, if something attacks a bee, the others try and help, even if it means their own lives are at stake. Bees relying on each other for survival, community, and support can inspire us to work together and create a better, more united society.



The Bumblebee (*Bombus*) is the most common bee in New Jersey.

The European Honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) comes in at a close second!

DO YOUR PART

It is our responsibility as humans to take care of the world around us, and with that, we must make it our job to help the honeybee thrive, not only for their sake but for the sake of our entire existence. Bees play a necessary and vital role in pollinating around \$15 billion worth of crops. That's more than 130 types of fruits, vegetables, seeds, and nuts. Unfortunately, since the rise in usage of pesticides and insect-repellents, the overall population of wild honeybees is declining. This unfortunate decline causes a negative impact on their natural habitats, the natural cycle of wildlife, the air we breathe, and our food supply. However, we can do our part in helping our little buzzin' buddies by planting native flowers or plants, avoiding the use of synthetic pesticides and herbicides (especially during flower season), and allowing them to just coexist in our presence when experiencing the outdoors. When we are more compassionate towards living creatures of all shapes and sizes, we're doing our part in caring more for the planet in which we all share and building the foundation that leads to a healthier future for us all.