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## World Bee Day: What's All The Buzz?

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Approximately 75 percent of the planet's crops depend in part on animal pollinators. One of the most important and, unfortunately, under-appreciated is the bee. Aiming to increase awareness around the ways these insects contribute to global food supplies and to promote protection of bees and other pollinators, the United Nations (UN) has designated May 20 as World Bee Day.

There are more than 20,000 species of bees worldwide. However, climate change and large-scale agricultural production techniques – including the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, monocropping (planting only one type of crop on a large scale), and migratory beekeeping practices – has contributed to the widespread decline of bee populations. This in turn has led to lower crop yields. Recognizing a “pollination crisis” and its impact on biodiversity and human livelihood, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity has made the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators a priority.

Two properties within the Regenerative Resorts collection have incorporated beekeeping into their regenerative farming practices, with great results.



At the [Datai Langkawi in Malaysia](#), eight hives are scattered throughout the resort's garden, each housing a colony of up to one thousand stingless *Heterotrigona itama* bees. Two years ago, a chance meeting with local beekeeper Pak Long spawned a partnership with the property that has helped to increase produce yield in the hotel garden and create bee-made products for guest consumption. One liter of honey is harvested from the hives every six weeks (less during the rainy season, when fewer flowers are in bloom). Garden Manager Zakwan Zamri and his team also harvest propolis, a resinous substance rich in antioxidant and antimicrobial compounds. The Datai has found various uses for these products; honey is on offer at breakfast and for sampling during permaculture walks, as well as for purchase in the gift shop. Pak Long also runs workshops where guests can make their own propolis soaps.

In [California, The Ranch Malibu](#) welcomed two colonies of bees to its property one day before Earth Day. The bees play an important role, pollinating the produce and wildflowers in the onsite organic garden. "We wanted to bring in and establish beehives in our garden apiary to bolster the efforts of our native pollinator population," says Helena Van Brande, Garden Manager and Head Beekeeper at The Ranch Malibu. "Many of the bees that already visit our garden might travel from as far as five miles away in search of nectar and pollen! However, we also recognize that it is our responsibility to ensure the future of honey bees. Bee hives already face many risks of colony collapse disorder (CCD), which can be caused by any number of factors such as pesticide or herbicide poisoning, disease, and malnutrition. We want to do what we can as responsible food producers and beekeepers to ensure the future of honey bees." That means growing fruits and vegetables organically and in line with biodynamic principles. "The more biodiversity we have in our garden, the better we are as caretakers of the soil and environment, and the richer our produce will be as a result." Honey is also a star ingredient in two of the property's signature products - The Ranch Wild Honey and the Bee's Milk Facial Scrub.



"Pollinators play an essential role in helping to feed a rising world population in a sustainable way and help maintain biodiversity and a vibrant ecosystem. They contribute to building resilient livelihoods and creating new jobs, for poor smallholder farmers in particular, satisfying the growing demand for healthy, nutritious food as well as non-food products," advises the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). "Already the highest agricultural contributor to yields worldwide, pollination, with improved management, has the potential to increase yield by a quarter."

For their part, The Ranch Malibu and The Datai Langkawi plan to grow their apiary programs, promoting regenerative agriculture and allowing guests to learn about beekeeping practices. To date, the results have been as sweet as honey.

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