



Honey from the Geneva rooftops – all about our commitment to bees

PwC Switzerland is fighting for Switzerland's bee population. We have supported the Geneva start-up [BEES4YOU](#) for eight years. Since January 2024, [APIDAE](#) took over the management of our hives. Our goal is to raise awareness among our staff and Swiss society about how important and irreplaceable honey bees and wild bees are. The survival of these pollen and nectar-collecting creatures is essential for a healthy ecosystem and for biodiversity to thrive.



Did you know that around a third of our food only grows because it is pollinated by bees and other insects? Honey and wild bees account for an estimated 80% of this pollination. So it's alarming to learn that in less than 60 years more than half of the bee population has disappeared. PwC Switzerland already decided a couple of years ago to do something about it and, together with the BEES4YOU organisation, and now with APIDAE, has taken concrete measures in Geneva to protect Switzerland's bees.

Why bees are so important

Each day a bee flies from flowering plant to flowering plant to collect lots of pollen and nectar. They do this to feed themselves, but in doing so they also pollinate the plants, which is the only way for them to reproduce. Per foraging flight, a bee – at a top speed of up to 30 km/h – can pollinate around 100 flowers. With 10 foraging flights a day, that's 1,000 flowers. If 20,000 bees within a hive each swarm several times a day, 20 million or more flowers are pollinated each day. These creatures therefore help ensure that we can enjoy an unbelievable array of fruit and vegetables.¹

Multiple factors contribute to bee deaths. Monoculture leads to poor immune systems in bees. When bees only feed on



pollen and nectar from a single food crop in a monoculture agricultural setting, they are denied the vital nutrients that enable them to fight fungal and bacterial infections that are known to kill a lot of bees.² There is an overwhelming number of scientific studies linking bee declines to pesticide use and illustrating the far reaching impacts toxic chemical pesticides have on a wide range of environments. These bee-harmful pesticides have many long-term detrimental effects and pose an increased risk to fragile ecosystems.³ Also, one of the biggest threats for bees is the varroa mite. Varroa destructor and Varroa jacobsoni is a parasite of adult honey bees and honey bee brood. It weakens and kills honey bee colonies and can also transmit honey bee viruses.⁴

with BEES4YOU for eight years and now have a new partner APIDAE, an apiary for Geneva-based companies.

At the heart of our cooperation there are two beehives, which APIDAE manage for us on the roof of a building close to our PwC Switzerland offices in Geneva. Urban beekeepers are popular in cities around the globe. This is because cities provide a bee-friendly environment. Honey bees enjoy a diverse range of flowering plants and thus a varied diet and plenty of pollination opportunities. APIDAE harvest the honey made by the busy rooftop bees and PwC sells it to staff at its Geneva offices. The proceeds from the sale of the honey go to a good cause.

And on top, PwC employees get the chance to take part in interesting workshops run by APIDAE. These could be a team-building event or activities like visiting the beehives, watching the honey harvest or creating candles using beeswax.

Our commitment to the environment is multifaceted. We are delighted that, with the support of APIDAE, we can do something for our indigenous honey and wild bees – and by extension for Swiss society.



It's not only a honey pot

This is a Geneva Office initiative that allows us to produce our own honey. Once a year, after the harvest, our staff has the opportunity to buy a pure and local honey, produced by our two beehives, placed on a rooftop, visible from the office.

Each year, we choose a cause to support and donate the whole collected amount from the sales to a different association.

PwC's "urban beekeeper" in Geneva

Honey bees and wild bees are indispensable for humans and nature. As part of our commitment to the environment, we also support bees. That's why we have worked

¹ bee careful [in German only]: "Die Bestäubung durch die Biene", at <http://www.bee-careful.com/de/fruchtvieffalt/die-bestaebung-durch-die-biene/> (accessed on 18.04.2023)

² Prime Bees: «Monoculture and the honey bee», at <https://primebees.com/2017/06/08/monoculture-and-the-honey-bee/#:~:text=Monoculture%20leads%20to%20poor%20immune%20systems%20in%20bees&text=When%20bees%20only%20feed%20on,kil%20a%20lot%20of%20bees.> (accessed on 18.04.2023)

³ Center for food safety: «Bee decline & pesticide use», at <https://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/issues/304/pollinator-protection/bee-decline-and-pesticide-use-248> (accessed on 18.04.2023)

⁴ Agriculture victoria: «About Varroa mite of honey bees», at [https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/varroa-mite-of-honey-bees/#:~:text=Varroa%20mite%20\(Varroa%20destructor%20and,also%20transmit%20honey%20bee%20viruses.](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/varroa-mite-of-honey-bees/#:~:text=Varroa%20mite%20(Varroa%20destructor%20and,also%20transmit%20honey%20bee%20viruses.) (accessed on 18.04.2023)

