**City Bees**

More than 2.3 million Americans live in food deserts, low-income areas where residents don’t have access to nutritious food. New York City is a leader in combatting food deserts with more than 700 urban farms and gardens. They have found that adding bees improves food quality and increases yields up to 71%. Plus the colonies produce lots of wonderful honey.

In East Oakland, California, there is an organic farm planned, planted, and harvested by children in grades K-8. East Oakland is a community with only two grocery stores in a 3-mile radius. The urban bees and plants help the children to understand where their food comes from. In 2019, at four urban farms around Cleveland, nearly 50 young people learned about agriculture through urban farming. The youth developed skills in communication, leadership, and healthy living.

<https://www.beepods.com/urban-bees-thriving-in-the-city/>

Research published in 2018 by the Royal Society B has shown that bees living in urban areas live healthier lives than their counterparts in rural habitats. Bee colonies are larger, better fed and less prone to disease. Urban colonies also outlast their country cousins.

The study found that urban garden flowers provide a diverse and consistent diet for bees and that the use of fewer pesticides may be the cause of bees thriving in the city. Urban vegetable gardens have been identified as particularly good spots for pollinators because they provide a combination of fruit and vegetable flowers, as well as corners full of weeds and native plants.

[Research published in 2018 by the Royal Society B](https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rspb.2018.0807?utm_medium=website&utm_source=archdaily.com)

The *Nature Ecology and Evolution* magazine reports that urban vegetable and flower gardens often have 10 times as many bees as parks, cemeteries and nature reserves. Researchers also found that gardens in wealthier urban                       neighborhoods were home to more pollinators since there are more flowers and a richer variety of plants.

<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rspb.2018.0807>

When it comes to bees, it is important to remember that there is a wide range of species. The native ones (often stingless), are the ones we should be most concerned about protecting because that pollinate their surroundings the most. It is possible to develop small structures to accommodate native bees which provide vital nesting habitat, consisting of a structure similar to a birdhouse containing a series of exposed tubes that bees can lay their eggs on.

<https://www.almanac.com/native-bees-best-pollinators-your-garden>

**Here’s an eco-choice you might consider. Check out the bee colonies in your community. If there aren’t any, you might organize a bee colony project for native (stingless) bees?**