

## **Colony Collapse Disorder**

Just what is causing CCD and exactly what it is, is still being debated by much smarter people than me. Oh I have my theories but I don't have hard evidence. Keep this in mind when you read my explanation.

I really think it is a combination of things. Lack of food, pesticides, herbicides etc..

First off when I was a young un growing up we never cleaned out our fence rows. Grandpa always felt it gave rabbits and quail places to hide from predators. Thinking back there was a lot of bee forage in those rows and I remember watching the bees working the plants. In there was a lot of Golden Rod which is a valuable fall forage for bees. Also back then people didn't attack dandelions with a vengeance like they do now. Dandelions are an important food source for bees in the spring.

Pesticides is one subject that gets beekeepers spitting bullets. With the introduction of GMO seed it has caused quite a stir in the beekeeping community. These seed are supposed to develop a plant that repels and kills insects that attack corn and other crops. My question is how can the plant tell the difference between a corn leaf aphid, corn flea beetle, corn ear worm and a honey bee or for that matter a bumble bee, butterfly etc.? How does it know to kill the bad insect and let the good insect go?

Herbicides have changed farming a lot. They are used to keep the fence rows clean, kill unwanted weeds in peoples' yards and the list goes on. Some of these products are nothing more than fertilizers on steroids basically. They say there is a "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico the size of New Jersey where sea life doesn't exist and it is believed it was caused by fertilizers dumping into the Gulf from the Mississippi. What happens when a honey bee works a flower that has been sprayed with a herbicide and then carries it back into the hive? How does that effect the bees or as far as that goes how is it effecting the honey we are producing?

I don't have the answers but I do know the importance of honey bee pollination. With out them the produce section of the local supermarket would be forever changed and there is the question as to if the human population could survive with out them. I really don't want take a chance and see if we can.

You can do your part to help by limiting the use of pesticides and herbicides. Also plant bee forage around your house to help feed the bees. Let the dandelions live and let the fence rows grow up. Long live the honey bee!