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## MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> WORLD BEE DAY



Raising public awareness of the importance of bees and apicultural products has an important role in the effort to protect bees and beekeeping sector.

Therefore, the Republic of Slovenia, on the initiative of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, proposes to the United Nations (UN) that

**May 20<sup>th</sup>** is declared  
a **WORLD BEE DAY.**



### Do you know that....

- Bees pollinate as many as 170,000 species of plants.
- Without bees, there would not be so many different kinds of fruits and vegetables, or such beautiful colours on the lawn.
- A bee colony is as big as a small town. There are from 30,000 to 60,000 bees in each colony.
- The queen bee is the only one that lays eggs. She lays up to 2,000 eggs per day.
- Out of 20,000 species of bees, only one is widely used for commercial honey production.
- The Carniolan honey bee, *Apis mellifera carnica*, is an indigenous Slovenian race of bee and the second most widespread bee race in the world.
- Honey bees' wings strike 11,400 times per minute, thus making their distinctive buzz.
- Honey bees are the only bees that die after they sting.
- To make one kilogram of honey, the bees have to visit 4 million flowers and fly four times the distance around the world.



More information on: [www.czs.si/content/wbd](http://www.czs.si/content/wbd)  
[www.mkgp.gov.si/en/world\\_bee\\_day\\_initiative/](http://www.mkgp.gov.si/en/world_bee_day_initiative/)  
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## The importance of bees for sustainable agriculture and ensuring food security in the world

Bees and other pollinators are very important for human survival. One third of food produced in the world depends on pollination and bees play the most important role among the pollinators. By pollination, bees contribute to successful agricultural production, to providing food security, and they also assure the nutritional security of the population with their highly nutritious products (honey, royal jelly, pollen...).

## The importance of bees for the environment

With their activity, bees have positive effects on the whole ecosystem and on the conservation of biodiversity in nature. Biodiversity is essential for maintaining the natural habitat and thus the humanity itself. It provides food, fuel, oxygen, cleans water and air, stabilises the weather and climate, increases the ability to adapt to changes, creates and renews soil fertility, detoxifies and breaks down waste products, pollinates plants, including many crops, controls pests and diseases in agricultural crops, maintains genetic resources that are crucial for the development of new varieties, medicines and other products, and enables cultural and aesthetic benefits. Bees are also a good bioindicator of environmental conditions. Through observation of their development and health status, we can determine when something is happening in the environment and if there is a need to take action. If we do not react to these warnings, the later consequences may be even worse.

## Endangerment of pollinators

In the recent period, especially in areas with intensive agriculture, bees are increasingly endangered due to environmental threats. Their habitat is shrinking and the conditions for their survival and development are steadily worsening. There are fewer and fewer nectar-bearing areas due to increasing monocultures and modified and intensified technology for grassland processing that provide the necessary food for bees only for short periods of time and with significantly less diversity than in the past. Due to this, we are witnessing poorer development of bee colonies. In addition to this condition, there are also new bee diseases and pests, resulting from the reduced resistance of bee colonies' and from globalisation, which supports the transmission of pests over long distances.



## May 20<sup>th</sup> – World Bee Day

We propose that World Bee Day is celebrated in May, which in the northern hemisphere is the month with the greatest activity in the growth of bees when the number of bee colonies increases to such an extent that the colonies swarm, which is their natural way of reproduction. During this period, bees are most numerous and the need for pollination is at its maximum. In the southern hemisphere on the other hand, it is autumn time, the time for harvesting products, and thus the days and weeks of honey.

May 20<sup>th</sup> is the day when Anton Janša was born (1734-1773). He is known as a pioneer of modern beekeeping and one of the greatest experts on bees of the time. He was the first modern beekeeping teacher in the world, and Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa of Austria named him a permanent teacher of beekeeping at the new Beekeeping School in Vienna. The world beekeeping expert A.G. Schirach also supported his nomination.



Janša's beehive in Breznica, Municipality of Žirovnica



His contribution to the beginning of modern beekeeping is of paramount importance. It is collected in two books: *Abhandlung vom Schwärmen der Bienen* and in *Vollständige Lehre von der Bienenzucht*.

He became famous even before his death in 1773. After 1775, all the state beekeeping teachers had to teach beekeeping following Anton Janša's teachings.

His life and work are described in many beekeeping books, including *The World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting* (Eva Craine, 1999).

