



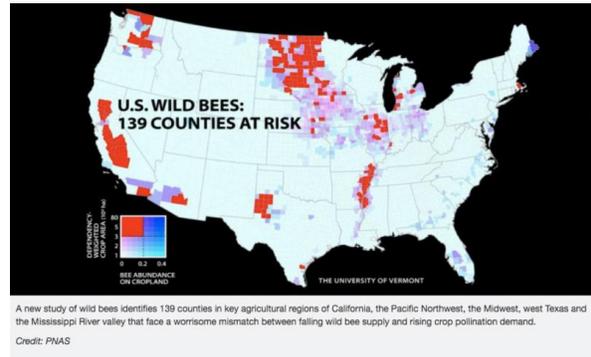
## PAm Monthly News and Updates

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### Danielle's Discourse

#### Can You Spare Some Range?

Project Apis m. has been advocating to support bees in agriculture for years, funding research projects and also improving bee nutrition by planting forage. [Seeds for Bees](#) in California provides free seed to growers to plant cover crops around their orchards, benefitting the grower while increasing duration, diversity and density of blooms available to bees. In 2017, PAm also helped launch the [Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund](#), a program to improve summer forage in the Upper Midwest for bees after their pollination services are done. All participants have been very satisfied with our programs, and there is a waiting list of growers, beekeepers, and landowners! However, we won't just speculate how good it is. These PAm programs are currently part of studies by scientists to gather data about the quality of our specific forage for honey bees and other pollinators. Some of this work is in press already and the news is impressive (stay tuned for updates)! PAm's forage programs are focused where they can do the most good: in California where the majority of the nation's managed bees are moved in to pollinate almonds, and in the Upper Midwest where a majority of the nation's summer bees are found in just a few states! A [map](#) from this recent [research study](#) full of great information about wild bees, shows very clearly the 'red zones' in the two areas we are working, California's central valley and the Upper Midwest. These are key areas that host managed bees; it's where we need bees most for agriculture, and unfortunately it is also where their sustenance is declining rapidly.



When habitat and forage resources erode in these areas, all pollinators lose. In contrast, when we develop habitat by planting forage there, honey bees and wild bees can all gain! In the Upper Midwest we can also expect benefits to extend to Monarch butterflies, songbirds, game birds and other wildlife. We couldn't be more excited! We hope you will join Project Apis m. and support these programs to replace what has been lost—critical forage on the landscape for pollinators. As we work to solve the complexities of the stressors our bees face, the simplest help we can offer in the meantime is providing them good forage!

Danielle Downey  
Executive Director

[Read more from Danielle here...](#)

## The BIP Box

### Emergency Response Kits



It's that time of year when many beekeepers are beginning to work their colonies during good weather breaks. As they crack the inner cover, some are trying to determine why some colonies are bursting at the seams while others are barely limping along. If there are colonies that are showing signs of crashing or are obviously impaired, the Bee Informed Partnership offers a rapid diagnostic service that evaluates varroa, nosema and 7 viruses for up to 8 healthy colonies and 8 suspect colonies. More information, including ordering and sampling protocols, can be found here:

<https://beeinformed.org/programs/emergency-response-kits-2/>

The cost of a full kit and these diagnostic services is \$299. These samples take top priority in our lab and results are provided as soon as possible (usually within a few days) back to the beekeeper. Requests for pesticide sampling can also be added in the event of a suspected pesticide residue kill. We often tell beekeepers that keeping one kit in their inventory could be as important as keeping a smoker and a hive tool handy.



### Emergency Response Kit

*Photo Courtesy of the Bee Informed Partnership, Inc.*

[Read more BIP Box here...](#)

## We thank our recent supporters!

Molly Forsythe  
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## Billy's Blog

**P Am Forage Programs - more than just free seed**

[Seeds for Bees](#) free seed is only half the program. The technical advice and onsite assistance provided is how the program truly becomes useful. A significant amount of 2016/2017 Seeds for Bees enrollees had never grown cover crops in their orchard before. Simply sending them seed isn't good enough. In an effort to educate, Project Apis m. and Kamprath Seeds have teamed up to host three Bee Forage Cover Crop Field Days in March. Taking place in three different growing regions of California,



these field days will demonstrate how cover crops can improve soil and bee health. Join us on March 7th, 9th, and 15th to learn more about how cover crops can benefit your operation. This will be an outdoor event where attendees can view cover crops in almond orchards and hear presentations from growers and industry experts. Please RSVP to Billy Synk at [Billy@ProjectApism.org](mailto:Billy@ProjectApism.org) or 614-330-6932.

Billy Synk  
Pollination Programs

Director of

At Project Apis m. we do more than fund research and hand out free seed. We package up our knowledge and expertise in a way that is useful to beekeepers and growers. For example, Dr. Reed Johnson's pesticide research is complicated. Growers and their advisors may have a hard time navigating the results when trying to determine the best way to protect their crops without harming bees. This is why we partnered with the Almond Board to create a list of Best Management Practices. Now growers have an easy-to-read, practical guide for what to do when applying pesticides. My point is, providing raw data and information without applying it to practical solutions isn't very useful.



## Seeds For Bees

[Read more Billy's Blog here...](#)

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## Word From Wardell

### A Bloom to Remember



Each year I think the almond bloom couldn't get any stranger, and then a year like this comes along. Early rains in December and January had set up the San Joaquin Valley with good soil moisture that penetrated nicely. Growers and beekeepers alike were looking forward to a good blooming season. The added moisture brought out early wild flowers that support the bees prior to and during bloom. The [Seeds for Bees](#) plots sponsored by Project Apis m. also benefited from the early rains. At Wonderful Orchards we only watered our supplemental forage plots once, just after planting. The rains did the rest, and the plots look great this year.

The orchards appeared to be on track for a pretty normal bloom. Then the Pineapple Express, a warm

The cool temperatures have slowed down bloom development giving the bees a chance to catch up with their pollinating duties. In spite of the rain and cool temperatures there have been good flight hours for pollination with bees bringing in pollen loads and some nectar in the southern region. Growers who pay premiums for larger colonies will likely see the benefit of the additional expense in higher yields this year, because larger colonies can field more foragers than smaller colonies. In cooler temperatures, smaller colonies must keep more bees in the hive to maintain cluster temperature making them less effective pollinators.

Colonies that I have inspected this year have less variation than seen in the last two years, and colony strength is up as well. I'm not saying that beekeepers haven't lost a lot of colonies this winter; I know that many beekeepers have lost significant numbers of colonies. While mites are always a suspect, many beekeepers claim that the mites in their colonies were under control and that the colonies were doing fine until temperatures took a dip in December and the hives began crashing within days. We still need to learn more about the complicating role that latent or dormant viruses play in colony stress.

Due to the wet conditions, growers have been spraying fungicides more than usual this year to keep fungal pathogens at bay. Aerial applicators are backed up with orders, because many orchards are too wet to get into with ground rigs. Bloom is still in full swing so the extent of spray damage won't be fully appreciated for weeks and possibly months. Hopefully, growers are following the Almond Board's

“river” of atmospheric moisture, pushed in from the Pacific and dumped days of warm rain on the valley and especially the northern almond growing region just as beekeepers were moving their bees into the orchards. Many beekeepers had trouble getting their colonies out of holding yards challenging their ability to meet their contract numbers. Orchards turned into swamps making it difficult to place and feed the colonies. The storm saturated soil, and associated high winds took out thousands of trees across the region. Many growers are still trying to clean up their orchards. The warm temperature and rain advanced bloom quicker than normal, but then a cold front came through dropping nighttime temperatures near freezing. Despite all the rain, growers turned on the sprinkler systems to reduce the risk of frost damage.

[Honey Bee Best Management Practices \(BMPs\) for California's almond industry](#) to safeguard the bees during pollination. For more information about these BMPs, go to the link above or go to the Almond Board's website and explore the Almond Grower link.

This year, eighty percent of the nation's commercial honey bee colonies came to California to pollinate the almond crop. Almonds are the first, and largest, commercially pollinated crop by the bees. These same bees leave almonds in a couple weeks and go on to pollinate an estimated one third of this country's diet. This is why it is so important to protect the bees during almond pollination, because they have so many other flowers to visit during the course of the year.

Gordon Wardell  
Chairman, Project Apis m



[Read more from Wardell here...](#)

## March Bee Husbandry

- The next 90 days is the best time of year to requeen. Try to requeen by end of May
- Control swarms by making nucs or splits.
- If forage isn't present, think about feeding pollen substitute.
- Manage your weak colonies, combine them with other colonies or add frames of capped brood.
- When is the next nectar flow? Remember one cannot treat for mites while a honey super is on. Check mite levels and treat if necessary.
- Take advantage of the cool weather appropriate mite treatments now before it gets too hot. Think about using, oxalic acid, formic acid, or HopGuard II. Always read the label.
- Beware of increased wax moth pressure on unoccupied frames.

*Project Apis m. is a 501 (c) (5) non-profit organization.*

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