Call Them Canna-Bees. How Cannabis Helps Bees and Vice Versa.



Researchers say that bees use cannabis to de-stress. And entrepreneurs say that honey from stoner bees is the next big thing.

December 13, 2018 4 min read

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The relationship between bees and cannabis is making headlines in both the scientific and entrepreneurial world. And it just may be a match made in heaven.

Case in points: A recent experiment shows that hemp may produce a needed pollen source for stressed-out bees. And an

Israeli company is marketing honey made by bees who are fed cannabidiols.

Both represent unusual bee-related stories, even by the standards of an insect that has provided many strage stories and unsolved mysteries through the years.

The good news for bees is that the marijuana industry may provide them a needed source of pollen. The good news for the marijuana industry is that bees may give it a hot new product.

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Bees and Hemp

A researcher in Colorado recently found that bees have visited hemp fields in the Rocky Mountain State, apparently using the plants as a source of pollen during the late-summer months.

In a paper delivered in November at an entomology conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Colton O'Brien, a student at Colorado State University, reported that representatives of 23 bee species living in Colorado had been caught in traps in the hemp fields during a one month experiment in August.

The project was essentially started because of an observation: "You walk through fields and you hear buzzing everywhere," O'Brien said at the conference. He even named his paper, "What is with all the buzzing?"

To find out why O'Brien conducted the study at two experimental hemp farms in northern Colorado where hemp flowers between late July and early September. The flowering falls during a time when other crops have completed their blooming periods, leading to a lack of nutritional sources for pollinators such as bees.

This can lead to bees becoming stressed as they try to find pollen sources. Bees need pollen to feed their young.

Enter hemp. While hemp plants do not produce nectar, they do produce a wealth of pollen. ”Thus, hemp becomes a valuable pollen source for foraging bees, giving it the potential to have a strong ecological value,” the report stated.

O’Brien and his team recommended that better pest control policies be put into place for hemp, given its potential importance for maintaining the health of bees – an area of concern for many years among researchers.

But when it comes to bees helping cannabis, things get weirder than that.

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Meet the Cannabeez

In 2016, a French beekeeper trained bees to make honey using the resin from the cannabis plant, according to Science Explorer. Nicolas Trainer, a marijuana advocate who had used medical marijuana to deal with hyperactivity since he was a child, became interested in combining the health benefits of honey with those of cannabis.

Over time, he trained some of his bees to collect resin from cannabis and use it in their beehive. Eventually, the bees used the cannabis resin in the beehives and eventually made what he calls “cannahoney.” He believes the cannahoney might even be better than other marijuana products. “Everything that passes through the body of a bee is improved,” he told the Science Explorer.

That’s the same stance being taken by PhytoPharma, an Israeli company that has developed what it calls “cannabeez.’ The bees are fed a low amount of cannabidiols and then produce honey that has, according to the company, the health benefits of CBD-infused items without the infused part.

Instead, it’s created entirely by bees. The product offers pain relief, sleep support and stress and anxiety alleviation, according to PhytoPharma, without the “intoxicating effects or chemical interference.”

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