



Honey from the  
Geneva rooftops –  
all about our  
commitment to bees



PwC Switzerland is fighting for Switzerland's bee population. We have been supporting the Geneva start-up BEES4YOU since 2015. Our goal is to raise awareness among our staff and Swiss society about how important and irreplaceable honey bees and wild bees are. The survival of these pollen and nectar-collecting creatures is essential for a healthy ecosystem and for biodiversity to thrive.



Did you know that around a third of our food only grows because it is pollinated by bees and other insects? Honey and wild bees account for an estimated 80% of this pollination. So it's alarming to learn that in less than 60 years more than half of the bee population has disappeared. PwC Switzerland already decided a couple of years ago to do something about it and, together with the [BEES4YOU](#) organisation, has taken concrete measures in Geneva to protect Switzerland's bees.

## Why bees are so important

Each day a bee flies from flowering plant to flowering plant to collect lots of pollen and nectar. They do this to feed themselves, but in doing so they also pollinate the plants, which is the only way for them to reproduce. Per foraging flight, a bee – at a top speed of up to 30 km/h – can pollinate around 100 flowers. With 10 foraging flights a day, that's 1,000 flowers. If 20,000 bees within a hive each swarm several times a day, 20 million or more flowers are pollinated each day. These creatures therefore help ensure we can enjoy an unbelievable array of fruit and vegetables.<sup>1</sup>

Multiple factors contribute to bee deaths. Monoculture leads to poor immune systems in bees. When bees only feed on pollen and nectar from a single food crop in a monoculture agricultural setting, they are denied the vital nutrients that enable them to fight fungal and bacterial infections that are known to kill a lot of bees.<sup>2</sup> There are an overwhelming number of scientific studies linking bee declines to pesticide use and illustrating the far reaching impacts toxic chemical pesticides have on a wide range of environments. These bee-harmful pesticides have many long-term detrimental effects and pose an increased risk to fragile ecosystems.<sup>3</sup> Also, one of the biggest threats for bees is the varroa mite. Varroa destructor and Varroa jacobsoni is a parasite of adult honey bees and honey bee brood. It weakens and kills honey bee colonies and can also transmit honey bee viruses.<sup>4</sup>



## PwC's "urban beekeeper" in Geneva

Honey bees and wild bees are indispensable for humans and nature. As part of our commitment to the environment, we also support bees. That's why, since 2015, we've been working with [BEES4YOU](#), an apiary for Geneva-based companies. [BEES4YOU](#) has obtained the [BioSuisse](#) certification in 2023.

At the heart of our cooperation are two beehives, which [BEES4YOU](#) manage for us on the roof of a building close to our PwC Switzerland offices in Geneva. Urban beekeepers are popular in cities around the globe. This is because cities provide a bee-friendly environment. Honey bees enjoy a diverse range of flowering plants and thus a varied diet and plenty of pollination opportunities. [BEES4YOU](#) harvest the honey made by the busy rooftop bees and PwC sells it to staff at its Geneva offices. The proceeds from the sale of the honey go to a good cause.

And on top, PwC employees get the chance to take part in interesting workshops run by [BEES4YOU](#). These could be a team-building event or activities like visiting the beehives, watching the honey harvest or seeing how soap is made using honey.

Our commitment to the environment is multifaceted. We are delighted that, with the support of [BEES4YOU](#), we can do something for our indigenous honey and wild bees – and by extension for Swiss society.



<sup>1</sup> bee careful [in German only]: "Die Bestäubung durch die Biene", at <http://www.bee-careful.com/de/fruchtvietfalt/die-bestaebung-durch-die-biene/> (accessed on 18.04.2023)

<sup>2</sup> Prime Bees: «Monoculture and the honey bee», at <https://primebees.com/2017/06/08/monoculture-and-the-honey-bee/#:~:text=Monoculture%20leads%20to%20poor%20immune%20systems%20in%20bees&text=When%20bees%20only%20feed%20on,kil%20a%20lot%20of%20bees.> (accessed on 18.04.2023)

<sup>3</sup> Center for food safety: «Bee decline & pesticide use», at <https://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/issues/304/pollinator-protection/bee-decline-and-pesticide-use-248> (accessed on 18.04.2023)

<sup>4</sup> Agriculture victoria: «About Varroa mite of honey bees», at [https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/varroa-mite-of-honey-bees/about-varroa-mite-of-honey-bees#:~:text=Varroa%20mite%20\(Varroa%20destructor%20and,also%20transmit%20honey%20bee%20viruses.](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/varroa-mite-of-honey-bees/about-varroa-mite-of-honey-bees#:~:text=Varroa%20mite%20(Varroa%20destructor%20and,also%20transmit%20honey%20bee%20viruses.) (accessed on 18.04.2023)