



BeeFacts

EU will help bees to fly

The economic benefit of pollination by insects is estimated to reach 153 billion Euro globally¹⁾. In Europe, the corresponding figure amounts to 15 billion Euro²⁾, and to 2.5 billion in Germany alone³⁾. The bumble bee is the most important pollinator, but is particularly threatened by several factors, and notably by enemy no 1, the Varroa mite.

Future perspectives for bumble bees have improved considerably this year as EU-policies have intensively taken on the issue. Promotion of bumble bees plays a major role within the „biodiversity strategy to 2020“. Several initiatives will benefit the bumble bees:

- The promotion of pasture (general grassland areas), which offer biological diversity – including the diversity of blossoms.
- The intensified control of invasive species – this includes the Varroa mite, which has been unintentionally introduced from Asia.
- Financing of agricultural measures which support biological diversity – including flowering strips, diverse cropping sequences, ecological fallows or intercropping with phacelia or clover, all of which are important sources of nectar flow for bees.
- Increasing dedication for conservation areas, in particular areas included in the „Natura 2000“-programme – and hence including the promotion of areas where the protection of biodiversity is of high priority.



Flowering strips

photo: Christoph Künast

- Promotion of the co-operation with farmers – and along with that an improvement of habitats and „ecological services“, one of them being pollination.

Beekeeping is facing enormous challenges. There is no silver bullet which will solve all problems in one single shot. EU policies in Brussels therefore offer a list of measures to be taken, the precise implementation being up to EU member states.

The good piece of news is: The issue has arrived at the political top level. It is worth the effort to look at the original documents, which can be found under:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>

¹⁾ TEEB 2010

²⁾ COM (2011)244 final

³⁾ aid