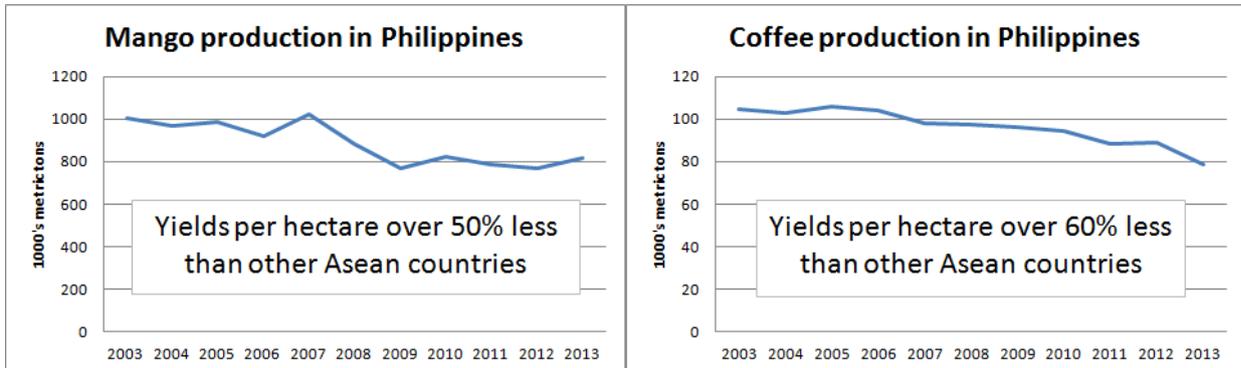


We all need the amazing Honey Bees

Look what is happening to crop yields because the honey bees are being destroyed....



(These statistics are produced by the Department of Agriculture.)

The bees help do something very important called 'pollination' so that plants can grow seed and fruit. Pollination is nature's way of the plants having sex to make more plants !



Plants grow flowers to attract bees, and the bees fly from flower to flower and spread the 'dust-like' pollen between the flowers. The bees put the 'male' pollen from one flower onto the 'female' parts of another flower, which then makes seeds and fruit.

Pollination by bees and some other insects means that mangos and coffee can grow, and that many more coconuts grow on the trees. Lots of plants really need bees to pollinate them so that farmers can get a good crop to harvest. So bees are really important to help plants make food for us.





Think of all the seeds and fruit that bees help make for us - nearly every plant with a flower ...

coconuts, mangos, coffee, peppers, star fruit, kiwi, cashew, rambutan, macadamia, sunflowers, papaya, lychee, guava, watermelon, cucumber, squash, gourd, luffa, avocado, pechay, cowpea, cocoa, passion fruit, oil palm, beans, tangerine, tomatoes and crops such as cotton.

(Plants like rice, sweetcorn and sugarcane spread their pollen using the wind.)



The bees also collect pollen and take it back to their colony to use as food. Bees also drink tiny drops of sweet fragrant nectar from the flowers, then make the nectar into honey and store it in their honeycombs.



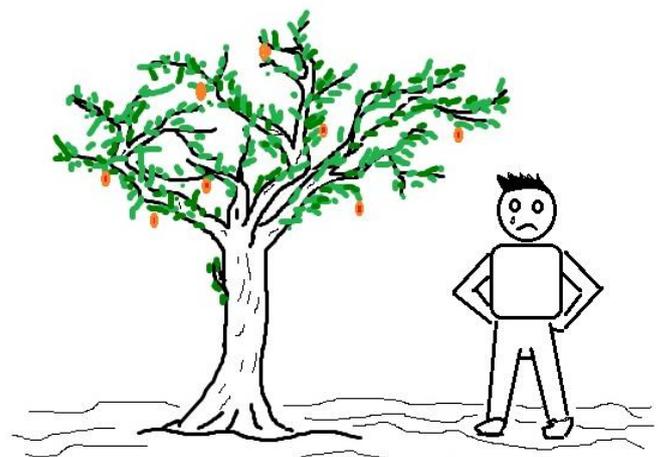
Question: What do you think will happen when a honey bee colony is destroyed?

Answer: There will be less mangos, less coconuts, less coffee and many other crops that the bees might have pollinated also become less. Also there will be less bees and less honey in the future.



So many honey bees are being killed by people 'honey hunting' that there are less and less bees every year in the Philippines. Look again at what is happening to mango and coffee production – research has shown a main reason for poorer crops is fewer bees each year to pollinate the crops.

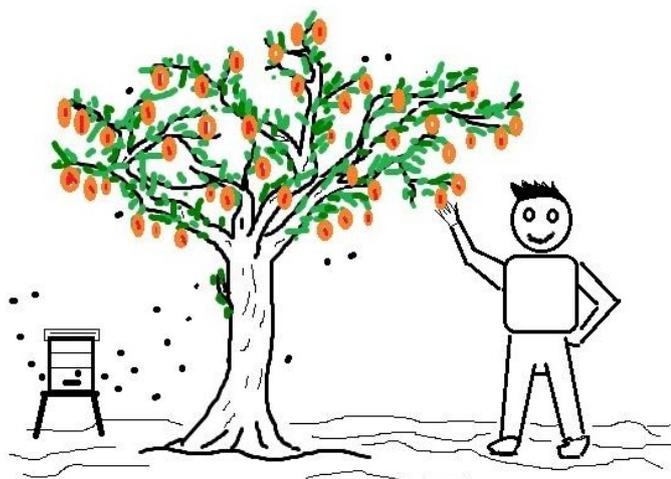
Because the bees are being killed off the crops are getting smaller and smaller. This means farmers are earning less and less money from the crops, and so many people in the countryside are also getting less money. If honey hunting continues, in a few years the honey bees might all be destroyed which means the farmers will have very poor crops, and many people will suffer.



In some parts of China all the bees have been killed by honey hunters, pollution and unselective pesticides. This means that poor desperate farmers now have to try and pollinate their fruit trees themselves using little feathers - this does not work very well and very few fruit grow. If we do not look after the bees in the Philippines this can happen here!

Each honey bee colony that is destroyed damages everybody's future, including the children's future. The Ligwan and Putyokan in the wild and in the mountains are very important - they need to increase in number or else the honey bees may completely die out in this area!

Many years ago there were honey bee colonies from the mountains down to the sea and now there are very few honey bees left in the Philippines, especially in the agricultural areas. This means that when a beekeeper puts a Ligwan beehive in a farmer's field many more of the plants will be pollinated by the bees, and so a lot more seeds and fruit will be made for the farmer!



In Vietnam many people are beekeepers and Vietnam produces over 600 times more honey than the Philippines! Many people have beehive boxes on the side of their houses - bees only sting if their colony is attacked.

A coffee farmer in Vietnam gets a 5 times bigger crop than a coffee farmer in this country! Having plenty of bees is one of the main reasons why many crops are bigger in Vietnam and why farmers and 'honey gatherers' are richer than in the Philippines.

Please respect the amazing bees which are so important for the well being of everyone, and then there will be more bees, better crops, more money and more honey in the future.

Being a 'honey gatherer' is much better for everybody, than being a 'honey hunter'. Honey gatherers leave part of the Putyokan comb and the bees can then recover to make more honey. Also make beehives for the Ligwan using simple boxes, and then harvest the honey without needing to dig out the colonies.



The leaflet called 'How to harvest more honey from bees' explains how honey gatherers can do this.

You can also be a beekeeper if you want to learn how to look after bees so that they can provide more honey and a good income in the future, as well as helping farmers get better crops.

If you are a farmer, or a honey hunter, or want to find out more about bees and beekeeping then more help is available – look at the website www.beephilippines.info or phone