

**The *ART* of the Specialty-Crops Pollinator Connection:  
Awareness, Relevance, and Training**

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**DESCRIPTION**

California's specialty crops depend on bee pollinators. Some require pollination, while others have higher yields and quality when bee pollination occurs. Healthy, abundant pollinator populations are thus essential to healthy foods.

Our first goal is to promote awareness and relevance of the specialty crop-pollinator connection to the public, including creating pollinator habitat in food gardens. We will conduct onsite and virtual outreach programs to accomplish our goals. Success will be measured by visitor counts, surveys, post-tour evaluations, and online page views.

Our second goal is to train other educators to expand our outreach. We will train student interns, Master Gardeners, and K-12 educators.

Success will be measured by the number of people trained and the number of programs they offer in the year after their training. Both goals will be based at our educational garden, the UC Davis Häagen-Dazs Honey Bee Haven. The garden includes 20 California specialty crops.

**PURPOSE**

Thriving specialty crop production ensures a supply of healthy, affordable food for California and the US, and from almonds to zucchini these crops depend on bee pollinators. Pollination also benefits home garden specialty crops. Yet policy makers (e.g. USDA) and researchers (e.g. Bee Informed Partnership) have documented that bee pollinator health is declining, which threatens the availability of the pollination services vital to an abundant, affordable supply of nutritious specialty crops.

Observed pollinator declines and federal directives on pollinator health (e.g. White House National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators) make this project important and timely. We will increase awareness of the specialty crops-pollinator connection (bee pollination is needed for an affordable supply of healthy human food), explain its relevance (we can all plant flowers for bees and support bee conservation), and train others who can expand our message's reach.

Our goal is to increase awareness among program participants of the connection between healthy bee pollinators, abundant, affordable specialty crops, and human health. Participants will learn that planting diverse flowers for bees leads to improved bee health, which in turn enhances crop pollination. Improved pollination increases specialty crop yield and quality. Higher yield ensures an ample, affordable supply of specialty crops that we can grow and purchase to make our diets healthier.

## **PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

This project will increase knowledge of specialty crops and their benefits. Our focus on the bee pollinator-specialty crops link makes our program interesting and unique. Visitors can see bee activity and crop pollination first hand at our facility, which hosts over 80 bee species. We grow 20 different specialty crops, along with 250 different flowering plants. This creates a memorable, hands-on understanding of how crops are created. By relating the diverse plants in our garden to bee health (bees need an abundant, varied diet), we connect visitors to their own diets (humans also need an abundant, varied diet) and they learn that consuming specialty crops is a way to achieve this. To stimulate children's interest in consuming specialty crops, we will present information in ways that are relevant to them, such as healthy vegetable pizza ingredients or Halloween pumpkins.