



The World Foundation for Natural Science

The New World Franciscan Scientific Endeavour of The New World Church

Restoring and Healing the World through Responsibility and Commitment in accord with Natural and Divine Law!

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First World Bee Day on May 20th 2018 and the important ban on neonicotinoids

On May 20th 2018 World Bee Day takes place internationally for the first time. The World Bee Day resolution states “...through education and activities it is intended to raise the awareness of the importance of bees and other pollinators, the dangers they are exposed to as well as their contribution for a sustainable development.”

The initiative for World Bee Day comes from Slovenia. The country has actively promoted it for three years. Slovenia is a nation with a long tradition in beekeeping. Every 200th Slovenian is a beekeeper– the highest proportion of any population worldwide. The choice of date for World Bee Day goes back to the birthday of the Slovenian pioneer of modern beekeeping Anton Janša (1734-1773) who as the first royal beekeeper for Maria Theresia developed new beekeeping methods and beehives. He was the principal of the first modern beekeeping school worldwide and is the author of numerous books on apiculture and apiary.

The final resolution on the petition for World Bee Day was adopted on December 20th 2017 at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, USA. The resolution was co-sponsored by 115 nations among others all the EU states, Brazil, China, Russia and the USA.

This day is important as it is not only the honey bee that is threatened with extinction, but all insects. Besides the on-going extinction of different kinds of insects, their population density is also dramatically reducing. In the last 30 years the number of specimens in Europe has fallen by up to 75%. The disappearance of

insects has a likewise effect on birds, feeding for the most part on insects, and also on pollination and the diversity of species of flowering plants as well as the conversion of material in the soil as this first step is performed by insects. The main causes for the massive dying out of insects and the birds are known: destruction of natural habitats, lacking basic food resources, toxic herbicides and technical radiation.

- Read our Fact Sheets “[The disappearance of the bees](#)” and “[Spring falls silent](#)”. You will find more information on World Bee Day at www.worldbeeday.org.

Long desired ban of three neonicotinoids

Slovenia, having made the petition for World Bee Day, has banned the use of pesticides belonging to the group of neonicotinoids since 2011, making it one of the first EU countries to do so. Neonicotinoids are neurotoxins that are structurally similar to nicotine and are especially dangerous to bees.

In 2013, three active substances belonging to the group of neonicotinoids (imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiametoxam) were partially banned in the European Union in accord with the precautionary principle. The ban was only temporary until the harmful effects had been further investigated. The producers Bayer, BASF and Monsanto filed an action for damages against this decision before the Court of Justice of the European Union. The trial has dragged on now over 5 years. A few weeks ago, on April 27, 2018, a final vote by the EU member states finally decided on the final ban on bee-harming neonicotinoids. The ban, however, applies only in the field. In greenhouses, the substances may continue to be used. Moreover, the ban applies only to the three active substances mentioned. Many other active substances from the group of neonicotinoids, which have not officially been proven to directly cause bees harm, continue to be used outdoors.

Even if the outside cultivation ban of these three neonicotinoids is an important step for environmental protection, it is important to continue to be vigilant! The prohibition of these pesticides does not change much in the long run, for new pesticides are being developed and approved constantly, which quickly fill the space of the banned substances. The EU-wide renewal of the approval of the herbicide glyphosate in November 2017 showed how much influence agrochemical companies have. The approval was extended even though the active substance was classified as

“probably carcinogenic” and threatens the diversity of wild flowering plants and thus the livelihoods of bees.

Therefore, it is important that we remain vigilant and active. It requires your effort to educate people about the harmful effects of pesticides and promote pesticide-free farming. It needs an understanding that pesticides cause more harm in the eco-cycle than they bring any benefit and that they are superfluous in a diverse agriculture in which insects as beneficial animals and “co-workers” are encouraged.

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