

Pesticides Can Kill (Reputations) [Editorial]

By [Carol Miller](#) | November 10, 2014



In late October, Bell Nursery owner Gary Mangum showed a room of his peers a video he and a team of allies had created on the topic of neonicotinoids.

But first, he showed a video of a neonicotinoid protest at a local Home Depot. A group organized by Friends Of The Earth dressed in bee costumes to voice their concern about how neonicotinoids kill bees. In the video, a woman asked a guy pulling a wagon and wearing an elaborate costume (think a fuzzy, yellow and black fez with antennae and a bulbous, fuzzy torso) about what he was protesting. She wasn't baiting him, just asking straight forward questions. He answered defensively, accusing her of working for Home Depot or a chemical company. She told him she didn't, that she was just curious. He started on a rant filled with so many errors, it was obvious this guy was reacting emotionally to the call to protest without any real understanding of the issue.

And it turned out he was the spokesperson for the protest.

The second video is one Mangum, AmericanHort and other allies are putting together for the industry. It reviews the current scientific evidence of bee die-offs and the impact of pesticides in general and neonicotinoids specifically.

Something struck me as I watched those two videos. In the first, the protesters were full of passion. Yes, they looked silly in their bee costumes and the leader came off as an idiot, but they were all sincere. In the second, it was a series of fact-based scientific types discussing bee health, how neonicotinoids work and so on. Not a scrap of passion was evident.

While the second video will be important in educating our industry so it's better equipped to talk to the public, we need to find a way to connect to the public.

Passion Matters

The average person is concerned with bee die-offs. Colony collapse has been making the news for years, with reporters outlining how it may affect our food supply for fruits, nuts and vegetables.

The public has heard a parade of reasons behind the die-offs. Cell phones were blamed for a while, then viruses. Today, if you ask someone about why bees are dying, you'll hear that pesticides are the main reason. The person you ask may not be aware of the word "neonicotinoid," nor the story behind the improper application of the pesticide that killed off 50,000 bees. But they do know that pesticides are killing bees.

And they're right. Pesticides can kill bees when misused.

Perhaps we can draw an analogy to human drugs. Drugs in the wrong doses can kill, but we wouldn't want to ban their use. Take nitroglycerin. It can be used as an explosive, or it can be used to prevent a heart attack. People have died from accidental overdoses of Tylenol. But in correct doses, it makes life easier.

In Mangum's educational video, one story stood out as a possible tale worth retelling. Native hemlocks in New England were attacked by an invasive pest that killed off almost 6 million trees. Only about 2 percent survived — those that were treated with neonicotinoids.

Armstrong Growers' James Russell had another suggestion: Put the emphasis on the need to feed bees with flowering plants. A local bee keeper uses Armstrong's property to give bees access to its fields and the surrounding groves, and the local media picked up on that story. We can legitimately and sincerely, promote our industry as a bee refuge for starving bees.

This storm over neonicotinoids may very well fade away. But something else will inevitably take its place. Unless we find a way to consistently present ourselves to the public for all the good we do for the environment and the levels we go to act responsibly (think of recycled water, which is a standard practice for growers), others will tell our story for us. And probably not in a way that is fair or healthy.

2 comments on “Pesticides Can Kill (Reputations) [Editorial]”



1. *Gerry Hayman* • [November 11, 2014 at 8:48 am](#)

What many members of the public don't realise is that, if they own family pets, they will probably have neonicotinoids under their kitchen sinks as spot-on flea and tick killers (Front Line, Advantage, Advocate etc). How do they feel about them? What would they use instead?

[Reply](#)



2. *Norah G Fon* • [November 11, 2014 at 3:46 pm](#)

NORAHG RESPONDS TO PEOPLE WHO WORRY ABOUT GETTING BEHEADED BY BEE CONSPIRACY TERRORISTS

You are on the side of **SCIENTIFIC TRUTH** ! Bee conspiracy activists, like those at Friends Of The Earth, are **COERCING**, **INTIMIDATING**, and **TERRORIZING** legitimate and knowledgeable scientists ! Just like the so-called global warming issue, which has now been debunked. Overall, neonicotinoid insecticides do not harm bees. If bee conspiracy activists were not so scientifically illiterate, they would know that scientific research shows that, as reported through EPA's and Health Canada's vast toxicology database, no harm will occur to bees. The alleged losses of bees are, in fact, the fault of the bee-keepers and **THEIR** mis-management practices. They are responsible, and **NOT** neonicotinoid insecticides. Their prohibition will not save bees since harming bees with these insecticides is a **MYTH** ! Neonicotinoid insecticides cause **NO** harm, and **DO NOT** harm bees. Researchers have **NOT** identified a single cause of over-wintering honeybee losses. Moreover, researchers have **NOT** been able to identify a single cause of bee colony collapse disorder. Under normal field use of neonicotinoid insecticides, the exposure to bees is at very low levels, far too low to cause harmful effects. There is **NO** evidence to suggest a link between neonicotinoid insecticides and bee colony collapse disorder. Overall, so-called links and causes between bee colony collapse disorder and neonicotinoid insecticides are mere **MYTHS** ! The weight of the scientific evidence clearly shows that neonicotinoid insecticides **DO NOT** affect long-term colony health. Overall, neonicotinoid insecticides play a **NEGLIGIBLE** role compared to diseases, viruses and loss of habitat. Most experts agree that, in recent years, bee colony collapse disorder is the result of a combination of factors, including parasitic mites and diseases. Recent scientific research points toward a combination of parasitic mites (specifically the

varroa mite) and pathogens (such as nosema and viral diseases) as main factors. Although some neonicotinoid insecticides are toxic to bees upon direct contact (as are many insecticides), they are used in a way that minimizes any direct exposure to bees, such as seed treatment. Seed treatment insecticides have been used for a decade with almost NO incidences of negative impacts on bees by minimizing potential exposures of non-target insects such as bees. Independent, long-term, controlled field tests have repeatedly shown NO effects on bee losses, weight gain, worker longevity, brood development, honey yield, and over-winter survival relative to bees in areas where treated seed was not used. If we had less conventional neonicotinoid use in the environment, we would still have bee colony collapse disorder, because many bee-keepers are NOT competent to manage their hives. Prohibition will not save bees.

<http://tinyurl.com/pxqzh6m> For the whole truth regarding BEES, go to The Pesticide Truths Web-Site ... <http://wp.me/p1jq40-6WJ> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2BA>

<http://wp.me/p1jq40-6H8> <http://wp.me/p1jq40-7ty> NORAHG is the National Organization Responding Against HUIE that seek to destroy the Green space industry.

WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORA H G Get the latest details at

<http://pesticidetruths.com/> <http://pesticidetruths.com/toc/> <http://wp.me/P1jq40-2rr>

<https://www.facebook.com/norah.gfon>