

Nearly 94 Percent of Native Plant and Pollinator Networks are Gone or Damaged

It's no secret that bee populations are in trouble, and new research from York University examined the history of native bee and plant systems and found that 94% of those networks have been lost. Thirty percent of the networks have been lost permanently, while 64% of networks have been disrupted because native bees no longer visit native plants.

There are several reasons for the losses in the networks. Climate change is likely the biggest driver. We know that over the last 100 years or so annual temperatures have changed by two and a half degrees. This is enough to alter the time when certain native plants bloom...

For a bee that's out for months on end or is a generalist pollinator, this isn't such a critical mismatch, but for a bee that's only out for two weeks of the year and only has a few floral hosts, this could be devastating."

Sandra Rehan, Study author, University of New Hampshire

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Native bee populations are also under pressure from invasive species. Global ornamental plant trade has been able to easily migrate insects that live in plant stems from one continent to another and displace native populations. In addition to invasive species, neonicotinoids disrupt bee behaviors like flight ability, learning and memory ability, and temperature regulation.

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