

## World Bee Day [May 20]

The United Nations declared May 20th every year to be observed as World Bee Day to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development.

In this article, we shall discuss at length the significance of bees in the ecosystem and the importance of World Bee Day. Also, know why May 20th was chosen for the celebration of this day and a brief history of this initiative.

### World Bee Day 2021 - Key Points

- The fourth World Bee Day was celebrated on May 20, 2021
- The theme for the day was “Bee engaged – Build Back Better for Bees”
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual event was organised by the Food and Agricultural Organisation
- The event called for global cooperation and solidarity to counter the threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to food security and agricultural livelihoods alongside prioritizing environmental regeneration and pollinator protection

### A Brief Background of World Bee Day

- The Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association launched an initiative in 2014, advocating that 20th May must be observed as World Bee Day
- In September 2015, the initiative was backed by the largest international beekeepers’ organisation, Apimondia
- On November 17, 2017, after more than three years of effort, the UN’s Economic and Financial Committee adopted a resolution proclaiming World Bee Day
- The initiative was supported by all UN states, while 115 countries also acted as co-sponsors, including major countries such as the USA, Canada, China, Russia, India, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, and all European Union Member States

### Why a World Bee Day?

The significance of observing World Bee Day each year is that it will help raise awareness on the essential role bees and other pollinators play in keeping people and the planet healthy, and on the many challenges they face today.

United Nations in a report has stated that Bees are under great threat. Present species extinction rates are 100 to 1,000 times higher than normal due to human impacts. Close to 35 per cent of invertebrate pollinators, particularly bees and butterflies, and about 17 per cent of vertebrate pollinators, such as bats, face extinction globally.

## Why was May 20th chosen as World Bee Day?

May 20th is the birth date of Anton Janša, a Slovenian beekeeper, the pioneer of modern beekeeping and one of the greatest authorities on the subject of bees.

## Importance of Bees for the Ecosystem

Bees are considered as one of the most hard-working creatures on the planet which have benefited people, plants and the environment. Given below are the key points of importance of bees in the world:

- **Helpful in Crop Production** - Pollinators such as bees, birds and bats, affect 35 per cent of the world's crop production, increasing outputs of 87 of the leading food crops worldwide, plus many plant-derived medicines
- **Food Security** - Bees are renowned for their role in providing high-quality food (honey, royal jelly and pollen) and other products used in healthcare and other sectors (beeswax, propolis, honey bee venom).
- **Biodiversity and Environmental Protection** - Bees are vital for the preservation of ecological balance and biodiversity in nature