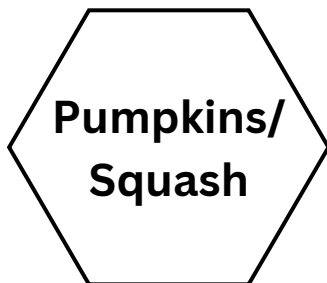
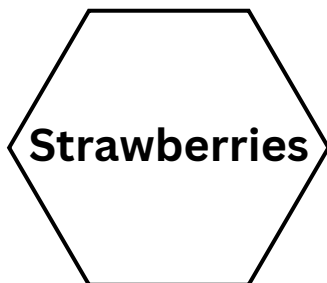
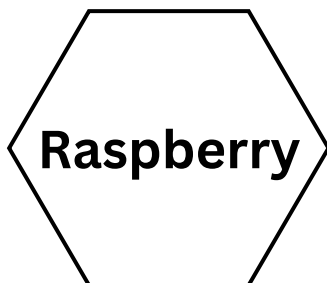
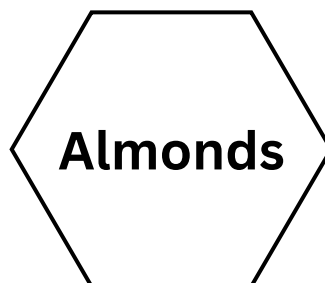
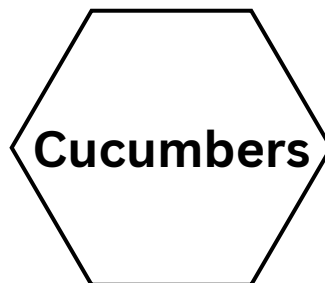


The Buzz About Bees

More than the Honey



Bees don't just make a sweet treat for us. They also make sure we have food on the table! Bees pollinate crops as they gather nectar from flower after flower. Without them, we'd have far fewer choices for fruits and vegetables. Some crops, like apples and cherries, require cross-pollination. In other words, from one tree has to make it to a flower on a different tree in order to produce fruit. Honeybees are instrumental in cross-pollination -- in fact, scientists have estimated that 97% of the pollinators in apple orchards are honeybees!



Where are the Bees Going?

Do you remember hearing about Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)? Back in the early 2000s, beekeepers found their bees abandoning their hives for no apparent reason. Fortunately, CCD is much less of an issue today than it was several years ago -- CCD was responsible for 60% of the hives lost in 2008, but only 31% of the hives lost in 2013, and early data from 2014-2015 didn't even mention it. But bee colonies still face many challenges. Mites, diseases, and pesticide exposure can harm bees, and as more land gets developed, it becomes harder for bees to find enough nectar (or to find a good variety of nectar). Stress might also weaken bees' immune systems. Today, scientists think CCD might be caused by several challenges all happening at once -- one challenge might not push a colony over the edge, but several things together might.

So what can you do to support honeybees?

Make sure not to use too many pesticides on your lawn, and if you have to use them, try not to spray during the middle of the day (when bees are most active). You can also plant bee-friendly flowers, like foxgloves and red clover, or set out dishes of water to make your yard a welcoming place for these busy pollinators.