

THE ECOSYSTEM SERVICE OF HONEYBEE FORAGE



A variety of exotic, indigenous and crop plant species serve as vital forage resources (pollen and nectar) for South Africa's honeybees. These forage resources are essential for maintaining colony productivity and bee health for both wild and managed colonies. The forage is therefore an indirect ecosystem service – because without good forage, the honeybees would not be able to provide the pollination service to our crops.

Forage Ecosystem Service



Apis mellifera capensis
pronounced black upper abdomen



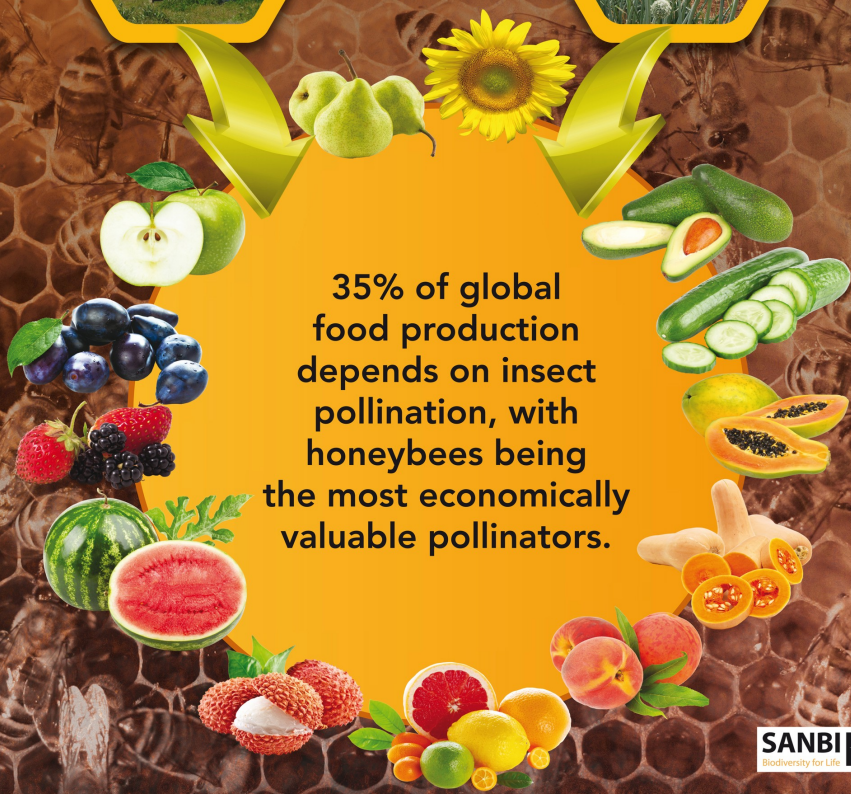
Apis mellifera scutellata
pronounced yellow upper abdomen

Managed honeybees are brought in to many farms in South Africa, particularly on large scale farms with little or no surrounding natural vegetation. These managed honeybees also rely on a variety of forage resources.

A direct ecosystem service occurs when farmers, usually in the vicinity of natural vegetation, benefit from wild pollinators in adjacent habitat providing a pollination service to their crops. Wild honeybees and other pollinators also rely on a variety of forage resources.

Crop Pollination

Ecosystem Service



35% of global food production depends on insect pollination, with honeybees being the most economically valuable pollinators.