



# Earthwise Delights

News & views from Earthwise Farms CSA

May 07, 2010

## Busy bees help us, we help them

Last Summer we brought bees to Earthwise Farms. Though just settling in they got right to work pollinating last year's crops. Over the winter they rested and now they're back laying eggs and building up stores from early flowering plants, trees- even gold-erod and wild honeysuckle.

In a few days we'll be adding two new hives, bringing our bee population to well over 40,000. That sounds like a lot but in the bee scheme of things it's not a huge number.

Almost all plants need help from pollinators (aka beneficial insects or "good bugs") to develop. Plants work in synch with specific insects, and not just any will do.

About one third of food crops benefit directly or indirectly from bee pollination. Without these small creatures we'd have a hard time growing enough food to feed everyone. Their role is so vital that traveling bee keepers are paid to bring hives to fields and orchards at just the right time for each crop!

So far, so good, right? Well, unfortunately that's not the case right now for honey bees. Why not?

### Honey bees are dying, sometimes whole hives at a time.

Large bee losses were first noticed in 2006 but probably began a while before. After much study the causes seem clear: Pesticides are the biggest problem, killing bees outright and/or weakening them so they fall to diseases and parasites or just don't come back. Other stressors- pollution, moving hives around a lot, and low variety diets- may also contribute to the problem.

Earthwise Farms makes extra effort to keep our bees (and consequently their honey) in tip-top shape with...

- **Rest stop cafés** Growing strips between fields and farms give the bees more of what they need close to home so they're less likely to go elsewhere.
- **A low-tox neighborhood** Almost all pesticides that kill the bad bugs kill or weaken the good ones, too. We don't use any and our neighbors within bee-range use very few.

• **"Whole bee" care** Our wide variety of plants, trees and grasses gives bees a good nectar mix for super nutrition. We give them a wonderful environment: enough space, food and water so they'll be happy to stay, and be strong enough to resist or recover from most germs.

• **Preventive house cleaning** Pollution is widespread. Despite our care bees will bring some back and enough can store in the wax to hurt such small creatures. So we'll clear the hives every 3-4 years.

These measures cost more but pay off in taste, nutrition and peace of mind. It's a sweet, sweet deal all around!

## Seasonal signup is a-ok again

After hearing from several folks who for travel or other reasons want produce for only 1-2 seasons a year we've added back that option. It'll take a few days to change the form but as of now we'll accept one season commitments. For now use the same form and write in "Spring Only". Costs are the same as the quarterly pay plan.

## Your CSA share

This Spring delivery is #4 for 2010-11. Egg sharers get eggs; Regular & even-week sharers get:

- Spinach
- Sugar snap peas
- Strawberries
- Kale
- Collard greens
- Beets & beet greens
- Yellow squash

Sign-up today! Only

**30 regular shares\* left.**

\*more if medium shares

## Gifts are in!

Gift certificates for full year pay shareholders have mostly been sent. The last few should arrive not later than Saturday the 8th.

We'll soon have a system set up so you can easily buy one from our website. Until then contact us for more info. Order by Monday & you'll get it with your Friday delivery!

**Earthwise Farms**  
Fresh, local foods from people who care

PO Box 413  
Aiken, SC 29802  
V: 803.221.3664  
info@earthwizefarms.com  
[www.earthwizefarms.com](http://www.earthwizefarms.com)

