

news



INSECTICIDES FOUND IN HONEY WORLDWIDE

Each year, honeybees provide the world with a billion kilograms of honey filled with immune-boosting goodness. Alas, researchers from Switzerland have found toxic insecticides are also present. Honey from six continents was tested and, on average, 75 per cent of the samples were found to be laced with at least one of the neuro-active insecticides known as neonicotinoids – or neonics. Researchers stressed that the samples were below the maximum-residue level authorised for human consumption – nevertheless, they are there.

For bees the story is not so good. Neonics poison nerves and prevent the neuro-transmitter acetylcholine from enabling neurons to communicate with each other and with muscle tissue. At less than two-dozen parts per billion, neonics cause bees to lose their minds and shake to death.

Apart from banning neonics worldwide, a solution may be found by replacing them with natural and safe 'smart' biopesticides. Renowned mycologist Paul Stamets and a research team have created Sporulating Mushroom and Repelling Technology (SMART) based on certain entomopathogenic fungi conferring incredible pest resistance to plants. If adopted, farmers could disperse a solution of pre-sporulating fungi onto the soil among the crops making them unattractive to pests. The solution doesn't kill insects but allows them to coexist in the fields. More on this soon.

Dr Reese Halter

CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME KICKS OFF IN NSW

New South Wales has finally joined South Australia and the Northern Territory in introducing a container deposit scheme. It commenced on 1 December, with the ACT and Queensland to follow suit in 2018.

With drink containers making up almost 50 per cent of community litter in NSW, the 800-plus reverse vending machines being installed will hopefully address that glut. Customers will receive a 10-cent refund in exchange for bottles and cans. Most empty 150 millilitre to 3 litre drink containers will be eligible for a refund, which will be provided in the form of a retail voucher or can be donated to local charities or community groups. If customers prefer cash, they can take the containers to collection points. The following can all be recycled in the reverse vending machines: PET; HDPE; glass, aluminium; steel; liquid paperboard (juice and milk cartons).

Details: epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/recycling-and-reuse/return-and-earn



THE STORY OF SEED CONTINUES

SEED: The Untold Story is an award-winning film that follows passionate seed keepers protecting our 12,000-year-old food legacy. In the last century, 94 per cent of our seed varieties have disappeared and more recently biotech chemical companies have taken control of the majority of our seeds.

SEED tells the harrowing and heartening story of seed heroes working to rekindle the connection and culture surrounding this treasured resource.

Activists featured include Vandana Shiva, Dr Jane Goodall and Raj Patel.

Head to seedthemovie.com to find out where you can catch the film. Note: The newly-opened Diggers Club Gallery at Heronswood (VIC) is showing an edited version of the film on loop (diggers.com.au).



EVENTS



SCHOOL STUDENTS VISITING CERES.

SUSTAINABLE AWARD WINNERS

A 35-year commitment to community-based learning has seen CERES win the Education category at the 2017 Victorian Premier's Sustainability Awards.

The largest deliverer of environmental education in Australia, CERES (Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies) has been a place for community-based learning and action that creates environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits and enhances nurturing ways of living together. CERES is located in an urban oasis in Melbourne's East Brunswick. For more visit ceres.org.au

ART IN THE GARDEN

Featuring 50 art installations from established and up-and-coming artists, Eden Unearthed is now on at Eden Gardens in Macquarie Park, Sydney.

The exhibition features a diverse range of works, located over nearly 3 acres of gardens, which contain over 25,000 plants, a creek, rose and perennial beds, and much more.

Look for Selina Springett and Alessandro Berini's *Dance of the Native Honey Bee*, which has live streaming vision of native bees. According to Eden Unearthed curator Meredith Kirton "it's an immersive installation with sound and wonderful honeycomb cocooning."

WHEN: Until end February 2018

WHERE: Eden Gardens, 307 Lane Cove Road, Macquarie Park, Sydney

COST: Free entry

DETAILS: 02 9491 9900; edengardens.com.au

JOE'S GARDEN

Visit Joe's Connected Garden – five interconnected houses and yards showing off organic vegies, fruit trees, chooks, ducks, permaculture ideas and more. There is a full program of talks and demonstrations each day plus food and drinks and a plant sale. Proceeds to charity.

WHEN: 10–11 February 2018; 10am to 4.30pm daily

WHERE: 6 Argent St, Elizabeth Grove, Adelaide

COST: Adults \$8, concession \$6, under 18 free.

DETAILS: facebook.com/JoesConnectedGarden/



FAMILY GATHERING

Shay and Dean Paine (winners of renovation show *The Block*) have embarked on a new project – a web series, *The Gathering Folk*, to inspire Australian families to embrace a greener way of living.

The duo and their young daughter Everly sold up and travelled around Australia in 2017, learning about how other Aussies are living consciously and sustainably along the way.

"We volunteered on farms, met urban vegie growers, worked with communities, and shared meals with other families who are paving the way of a greener future," Shay says.

You can catch up with the family at thegatheringfolk.com

LEFT: EVERLY, SHAY AND DEAN PAINE.