

Power lines may become honey bee homes

A scientist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City is proposing a novel solution to the dwindling number of U.S. honey bees.

Kimberly Russell, a researcher of invertebrate zoology, says honey bees take refuge under power lines when utility companies allow such land to grow shrubs and flowers, National Geographic News reported.

But utilities routinely keep the land mowed beneath their power lines to prevent vegetation from interfering with the delivery of electricity.

Meanwhile, U.S. farmers rely on European honeybees to pollinate their crops, but diseases, mites and pesticides have devastated those bee populations in recent decades.

Many scientists say wild, native bees can take up the slack, but Russell says such bees need a good habitat when they're not pollinating.

She says electric utility companies have a public relations problem with many people disliking power lines. She told National Geographic: "If they can put up a sign that says 'Wildlife Refuge,' maybe people will dislike the lines less. There's an opportunity there we should follow up on."

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