



Scientists create bee vaccine to fight off 'insect apocalypse'

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Scientists create bee vaccine to fight off 'insect apocalypse'-The insects are vital as they help fertilise three out of four crops around the world

- Scientists in Finland have developed what they believe is the world's first vaccine to protect bees against disease, raising hopes for tackling the drastic decline in insect numbers which could cause a global food crisis.
- Bees are vital for growing the world's food as they help fertilise three out of four crops around the globe, by transferring pollen from male to female flowers.
- But in recent years bee populations around the world have been dying off from "colony collapse disorder", a mysterious scourge blamed on mites, pesticides, virus, fungus, or some combination of these factors.

UN Study says

- UN-led research in 2016 found that more than 40% of invertebrate pollinators, particularly bees and butterflies, are facing extinction.
- The study also found that 16.5% of vertebrate pollinators, such as birds and bats, are under threat.
- Scientists warn that the die-off will result in higher food prices and the risk of shortages.

Medical breakthrough

- The vaccine, developed by a team at Helsinki University in Finland, works by giving bees resistance to fight off severe microbial diseases that can be fatal for pollinator communities.
- The treatment is administered to the queen bee via a sugar lump, similar to the way many children are given polio vaccines.
- The queen then passes the immunity to her offspring, spreading it

through the bee community.

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