

Enjoying the nectar of life

Sunder Nursery was abuzz with activity as honey lovers celebrated World Honey Bee Day

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NEW DELHI

On the occasion of World Honey Bee Day on Saturday, scores of people attended an engrossing and educative workshop at Sunder Nursery to learn about honey and the insects that make it.

The nearly two-hour workshop was organised by the Sunder Nursery Management Trust and Golden Hive Foundation with support of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Rakesh Gupta, chief adviser of Golden Hive Foundation, explained to participants how bees

can be kept and managed inside wooden boxes.

"The intent behind this event was to create awareness about the amazing role that bees play in the growth of our crops [as pollinators] and their significance as indicators of a healthy ecosystem," Mr. Gupta said, adding that he hoped to convince people to become urban bee-keepers.

The Asiatic bee

The workshop was a platform for enthusiasts to enhance their knowledge about bees and learn how to extract honey in a scientific



manner, he said.

Mr. Gupta also informed participants about *Apis cerana*, the Asiatic bee.

"This species of stingless bee is in need of conservation support. Normally, people in our country are ignoring Asiatic bees. A lot of

bees are being killed as people are indifferent and greedy for honey. They do not realise that they are killing entire generation of

Participants at the honey tasting session to mark World Honey Bee Day at Sunder Nursery in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

bees which will have severe implication on our planet," said Mr. Gupta.

The characteristics of European bees, introduced to India in the 1950s, were also explained.

Taking a cue from Sunder Nursery, a 16th Century heritage park complex, Mr. Gupta said that the bees are also part of our heritage. "Sunder Nursery is all set to become a sanctuary for bees. We need to sustain and multiply Asiatic bees. As the nursery is visited by so many people, awareness about bees would be created far and wide," said Mr. Gupta, who got into bee conservation around 19 years ago.

Ratish Nanda, who heads the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, said: "Sunder Nursery is Delhi's historical park, which people use like New York's Central Park. We all know that bees are a valuable species... if they disappear then there would be no food and it

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RAKESH GUPTA
Chief adviser of Golden Hive Foundation

would be the end of humans. Even the government has said that steps need to be taken to preserve the Asiatic bee. Historically, all Mughal gardens had plants as well as bees. We will be installing multiple bee hives at open green spaces across the nursery."

A honey tasting session was also conducted where participants, including children, got to taste different variants.

Anna Zimmer, a teacher at Ambedkar University, said that Mr. Gupta had shared his knowledge about the bees in a relatable manner with stories about his personal experience, instead of just imparting textbook knowledge.