

Gear up to **bee** wise

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IMPORTANT members of the insect biodiversity, bees are known to be one of the main pollinators. However, over the years, due to man-made changes to the environment such as the use of insecticides, the population of these winged insects is on a decline. As a way of informing citizens of the marvels that bees are, Rakesh Gupta (62)—beekeeper and chief advisor of the Golden Hive Foundation—will be conducting a 'Know the Bee' workshop at Sunder Nursery on Saturday.

Organised by Lucknow-based Golden Hive Foundation—it was founded by Gupta's wife Poonam—this workshop will commence at 8:00am in the sprawling grounds of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. "There is so much to learn from bees; be it hard work, patience, co-operation, or time management. Moreover, there are so many complex activities that they perform in simple ways and with perfection. That is extremely fascinating coming from such small and delicate insects," Gupta adds.

Making a 'buzz'

This interactive workshop will cover the basics of different types of bees—honey bees and stingless bees—as well as give an overview of how bees can produce honey from nectar. "There was a time when bees were considered a reincarnation of Goddess Lakshmi. Their

act of pollination as well as the golden honey that they created was symbolic of prosperity. However, over the years, we have lost this connection with these insects. I want to bring back the awe of bees," explains Gupta.

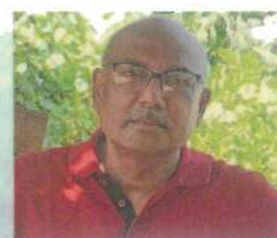
Elaborating why he wants participants to interact with the bees, Gupta mentions how most people are fearful of getting stung by bees. "This way, they can see the bees themselves and bust a number of myths. It is easier to connect with the practice when you see it happening in front of you."

Gupta shares that the best part about such workshops—he has conducted a number of them in Sunder Nursery as well as Lucknow, Bundelkhand, Noida, among others—is that many participants take up beekeeping as a hobby post these sessions and are able to identify bees and hives individually. "It is really satisfying to see so many people starting to get interested in these creatures. I see a gradual awareness growing among denizens."

Speaking of why having such workshops is important, he concludes, "It is not that people don't know that bees are important. They have a certain understanding. All we do is reinforce and bring it to the limelight."



(Above) Images from 'Know the Bee' workshops organised by Golden Hive Foundation in the past; (below) a participant interacting with the bees



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RAKESH GUPTA, chief advisor, Golden Hive Foundation