



LEAD for Pollinators, Inc.

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July 13, 2026

To the Members of the Akron City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed updates to Title 9, Chapter 92, Section 92.29 of the Akron Codified Ordinances regarding beekeeping. As an advocate for sustainability and local ecosystems, I believe these amendments modernize city policy while effectively supporting urban agriculture and essential pollinator populations.

The proposed ordinance introduces several **common-sense improvements** over the outdated framework:

- **Streamlined Registration:** Abolishing the redundant city permit process and aligning with the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) APIARY Program eliminates unnecessary red tape. Because the state already tracks, inspects, and enforces apiary registrations for free, this shift relieves city staff of a burden they are not specialized to handle.
- **Practical Care Standards:** Removing the highly restrictive and rarely enforced requirement for a water supply equipped with a backflow prevention device is a major step forward. The new rule simply requires fresh water to be maintained on-site and closer to the hives than neighboring properties, which perfectly aligns with statewide best practices.
- **Reasonable Space Requirements:** Setting a uniform, six-foot setback rule and allowing hive limits based on parcel square footage creates a fair balance between urban beekeepers and neighbors. It recognizes the practicalities of urban spaces while offering flexible provisions like "flyaway barriers" to prevent potential neighborhood friction.
- **Efficient Complaint Handling:** Establishing a clear pathway to forward community nuisance complaints directly to state and county apiary officials ensures that experts inspect and resolve issues swiftly.

Honey bees play a critical role in maintaining a healthy local ecosystem. By removing arbitrary restrictions and conforming to recognized state best practices, this legislation will foster a safer, more sustainable environment for urban agriculture in Akron.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued dedication to improving our community's environmental policies. LEAD for Pollinators urges the Akron City Council to pass this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Michele Colopy, Executive Director

Our mission is to provide leadership, education, action, and development to support the health and sustainability of honey bees, native pollinators, and the keepers of the ecosystem.

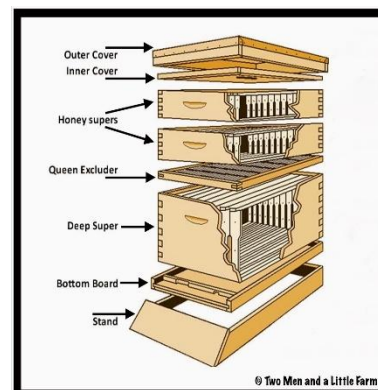
LEAD for Pollinators is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.



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2026

1. The history of beekeeping in Ohio (Ohio resident and *father of American Beekeeping*, Rev. Lorenzo Langstroth, developed the beehive in 1852, which is still used today. Rev. Langstroth's cottage is listed on the Register of Historic Places in Oxford, OH, and he is buried in Dayton, OH.
2. A.I. Root, of Medina, Ohio, is known as *the father of modern beekeeping* developing the process to mass produce and market beekeeping equipment.
3. Ohio "Bee Cities"
 - o Amesville Salem
 - o Athens Shelby
 - o Gahanna Village of Lithopolis
 - o Galena Wellington
 - o Mount Vernon Vandalia, Ohio
 - o Wright Patterson Air Force Base
4. Pollinator Habitat created- 33 acres
 - o Collaboration with Ohio State Beekeepers and Pollinator Stewardship Council at:
 - Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center
 - Fairborn Cement Company (Xenia)
 - Professional Services Providers (Wadsworth)
5. State House Bee Hives
 - o Two colonies funded by OSBA and managed by beekeeper, Tamra Ansel (grounds manager at Statehouse)
6. USDA Honey production in Ohio (operations of five or more colonies for **2025** from the [USDA NASS Honey Report](#))
 - o Ohio is top 15 U.S. beekeeping state
 - o 6400 registered beekeepers in the state
 - o 55,900 honey producing colonies statewide
 - o 79 pounds of honey per colony
 - o 116M pounds of honey
 - o National average price per pound \$ 3.05
 - o Honey production value \$4,500,000



VALUE OF BEE POLLINATION TO OHIO AGRICULTURE

POLLINATION AND OHIO'S BIGGEST AGRICULTURAL CROPS

For these crops, insect visits to the flowers are strictly mandatory to transfer pollen. Without insect pollinators, these crops would face a total yield failure.

- **Pumpkins (\$14.4M - \$25M):** Pumpkin vines have separate male and female flowers. They rely entirely on insects—specifically the native [Ohio squash bee](#) and bumblebees—to carry pollen from the male flowers to the female flowers to form the pumpkin.
- **Apples (\$12M):** Apple trees are self-incompatible, meaning they cannot pollinate their own blossoms. They require honey bees and wild bees to move pollen from one apple variety to another to trigger fruit development.
- **Cucumbers (\$3.8M):** Like pumpkins, cucumbers bear separate male and female flowers. Without heavy bee activity, the flowers drop off, or the resulting cucumbers grow stunted and misshapen.
- **Blueberries (\$1.8M):** Blueberries have heavy, sticky pollen that cannot be moved by the wind. They rely almost exclusively on bumble bees performing "buzz pollination" to shake the pollen free.

2. High to Moderate Dependency (Yield drops sharply without insects)

These crops can technically self-pollinate to some degree, but insect pollinators dramatically increase the size, quality, and total yield of the harvest.

- **Tomatoes (\$45M):** Tomatoes are self-fertile but require physical vibration to release pollen within the flower. Wild bumble bees provide "buzz pollination," which sharply maximizes fruit size and speeds up ripening for both field and [greenhouse tomatoes](#).
- **Strawberries (\$4.5M):** Wind and self-pollination can form small strawberries, but insect visits are required to fully fertilize all the tiny seed cavities, preventing misshapen, unmarketable berries.
- **Bell Peppers (\$2.5M):** Similar to tomatoes, they are self-fertile but benefit greatly from bees shaking the flowers, leading to thicker pepper walls and higher seed counts.

3. Partial or Indirect Dependency

- **Soybeans (\$2.74B - \$3.9B):** Modern commercial soybean varieties are self-pollinating. However, agricultural research shows that honey bee and wild bee visits to soybean fields can still boost overall bean yields by [10% to 18%](#).
- **Hay & Haylage (Alfalfa/Clover) (\$458M):** If harvested purely for animal forage, insects are not required. However, the foundational seeds needed to plant future fields of alfalfa and sweet clover are entirely dependent on specialized leafcutter bees and honey bees.

UNMEASURED POLLINATION BENEFITS

“There are areas where it is almost impossible to place a dollar value on bee pollination. One is the contribution that pollination of plants makes to wildlife food production. Another is the natural beauty resulting from pollination of wildflowers. Many shrubs and countless annual plants reproduce by bee pollinated berries and seed, which provide food for birds and other animals. Ornithologists may suggest that humans “feed the birds in the winter,” but the birds also depend upon naturally grown seed and fruit resulting from bee pollination. *The beekeeper with a small scale operation is very valuable in providing honey bees for this unmeasured contribution to pollination, because there are many Ohio hobbyist beekeepers spread through the state who increase food production for wildlife.*”