

# MEDIA ADVISORY

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Tom Van Arsdall [TVA@pollinator.org](mailto:TVA@pollinator.org) 703.509.4746  
Laurie Davies Adams 415.260.8092  
Isaac Lisle 415.362.1137

## Mite-A-Thon Begins Today!

### Involvement Supports Honey Bee Health and Measures Infestation Levels Across the Continent

The Mite-A-Thon (MAT), an international citizen science effort to teach measurement protocols to learn the varroa mite infestation levels of hives, collect mite infestation data and to visualize varroa mite infestations in honey bee colonies across North America, runs from September 7-21, 2019. All beekeepers are encouraged to participate within this two-week window to gain knowledge of the level of mite infestation that their hives are carrying just before the overwintering season begins.

The MAT was initiated 3 years ago by a group of core partners with the primary objectives of 1) raising awareness about honey bee colony varroa infestations through effective monitoring methods and 2) making management strategies available for discussion within bee organizations utilizing Mite-A-Thon partner-developed information and outreach materials.

“The Mite-A-Thon partnership brings multiple stakeholder together to help beekeepers understand the level of mite infestation in their hives. This is useful information through the life of the hive, but particularly in the fall just before overwintering. We are glad to be a part of this larger conversation that is so important to the health of the honey bee.” says Tim May, President of the American Beekeeping Federation and President of Sunny Hill Honey a founding partner of the MAT.

There is no cost to participate, and interested beekeepers can follow the below steps to join the movement:



1. Choose a day between September 7-21 to monitor mite levels.
2. Monitor using one of two standardized protocols for assessment (powdered sugar roll or alcohol wash)
3. Report your data including location, total number of hives, number of hives tested, local habitat, and the number of varroa mites counted from each hive to [www.mitecheck.com](http://www.mitecheck.com).
4. Published report will follow the MAT! (Published information will not identify individual participants.)

The parasitic mite, *Varroa destructor*, a disease vector and ubiquitous scourge across the continent’s bee hives, is a significant driver of this honey bee colony mortality. Yet, indicators suggest that many beekeepers are not monitoring honey bee colony varroa infestations and therefore aren’t able to connect infestation to colony loss. Be a part of the movement and help support honey bee health today by participating as a beekeeper, or by sending a donation to support Mite-A-Thon and expand the conversation about mites and bees

**Partners supporting and guiding the Mite-A-Thon include Almond Board of California, The American Beekeeping Federation, The American Honey Producers Association, The Honey Bee Health Coalition, Project Apis M, Bee Informed Partnership, MiteCheck, Michigan State University, University of Maryland, University of Minnesota Bee lab and Bee Squad, Bee Culture Magazine, the Canadian Honey Council, and Pollinator Partnership.** Additional information about the MAT, resources, giveaway, and last year’s report is available at <https://www.pollinator.org/miteathon>.