

# Bees get hooked on harmful pesticide

## It disrupts their ability to reproduce

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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Bumblebees acquire a taste for food laced with a pesticide known to harm them, according to a study suggesting the chemicals pose an even greater threat to pollinators than previously thought.

In experiments, researchers showed that bees initially put off by sugar water containing neonicotinoids – the most widely-used class of insecticides worldwide – soon started seeking them out to the exclusion of untainted food.

Neonicotinoids, earlier research has shown, disrupt the ability of bees to reproduce and lower their resistance to disease. “At first, it appeared that the bees did avoid the food containing the pesticide,” said Andres Arce, a researcher at Imperial College London.



Neonicotinoids are the most widely-used class of insecticides.

“However, as individual bees increasingly experience the treated food, they develop a preference for it.”

Even when the position of their feeders was switched, the pollinators made a beeline for the one laced with insecticide.

Neonicotinoids target nerve receptors in insects.

The United Nations warned last year that 40% of invertebrate pollinators risk global extinction.