



Australia Killing Million of its Bees

Why in News?

Australian authorities have killed millions of honeybees over the past two weeks in an effort to stop a potentially catastrophic parasite plague named **Varroa mite**.

- The decision to kill honeybees could adversely impact the growth of several crops including almonds, macadamia nuts, and blueberries that are dependent on hives for pollination.
- Bees are some of the most important pollinators, ensuring food and food security, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity.

Understanding the life cycle of the Varroa mite



What is Varroa Mite?

- Its **parasitic insect infects and feeds on honeybees**, often known as the varroa destructor. The small pests, which are reddish-brown in colour, have been **capable of eradicating entire colonies of honeybees**.
- They frequently circulate amongst bees as well as through beekeeping supplies like removed combs.
- Although Varroa mites can feed and live on adult honey bees, they primarily feed and reproduce

on larvae and pupae in developing brood, causing malformation and weakening as well as virus transmission.

- As the mite population in bee colonies grows, the symptoms become more severe. In general, heavy infestations result in crippled bees, impaired flight performance, a lower rate of return to the colony after foraging, and reduced colony productivity.

Source: IE

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