



Fruitless Fall: The Collapse of the Honey Bee and the Coming Agricultural Crisis

Rowan Jacobsen

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How the disappearance of the world's honeybee population puts the food we eat at risk.

Many people will remember that Rachel Carson predicted a silent spring, but she also warned of a fruitless fall, a time when "there was no pollination and there would be no fruit." The fruitless fall nearly became a reality last year when beekeepers watched one third of the honeybee population—thirty billion bees—mysteriously die. The deaths have continued in 2008. Rowan Jacobsen uses the mystery of Colony Collapse Disorder to tell the bigger story of bees and their essential connection to our daily lives. With their disappearance, we won't just be losing honey. Industrial agriculture depends on the honeybee to pollinate most fruits, nuts, and vegetables—one third of American crops. Yet this system is falling apart. The number of these professional pollinators has become so inadequate that they are now trucked across the country and flown around the world, pushing them ever closer to collapse. By exploring the causes of CCD and the even more chilling decline of wild pollinators, *Fruitless Fall* does more than just highlight this growing agricultural crisis. It emphasizes the miracle of flowering plants and their pollination partners, and urges readers not to take for granted the Edenic garden *Homo sapiens* has played in since birth. Our world could have been utterly different—and may be still.

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