

US bee expert awarded Tyler Environment Prize

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A leading US entomologist won the prestigious Tyler Prize for her groundbreaking work on the collapse of bee populations and coevolution of plants and insects, officials said Tuesday.

"Professor (May) Berenbaum has done more to advance the field of entomology and explain its significance than nearly any other researcher today," said Owen Lind, chair of the prize committee and a biology professor at Baylor University.

Berenbaum heads the entomology department at of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Using [genetic analysis](#) and experimentation, she helped explain pesticide resistance by showing how plants evolve to create natural defenses, like chemical toxins, and insects in turn evolve to overcome these defenses.

Her research has also been central to understanding the decline of bee populations in North America and around the world, known as [Colony Collapse Disorder](#).

"Someone has got to stick up for the little guy," Berenbaum said in a statement. "This world, this planet, would not function without insects. Our lives would be miserable without insects and people don't realize that."

Established in 1973, the \$200,000 dollar Tyler Prize for Environmental

Achievement is one of the first international premier awards for environmental science, environmental health and energy.

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