

Wimbledon strawberry prices would almost double without bees

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(Phys.org) -- Wimbledon fans were today warned they would face price rises on their strawberries of 84% if bees disappeared, according to new research.

This price increase would mean forking out £4.14 for a 10-strawberry punnet at the famous tennis tournament.

A report produced by the University of Reading for environment charity Friends of the Earth also reveals that insecticide use on [strawberries](#) has risen by an incredible 295% between 2005 and 2010, increasing the risk to bees.

The new data comes from research by the University of Reading on behalf of the charity's campaign The Bee Cause. In recent years many bee species have been declining, placing our food supply and economy under threat. Research revealed that without bees, it would cost the UK at least £1.8billion every year to hand-pollinate crops.

Strawberries are highly reliant on bees for pollination. Good quality commercially-grown strawberries require the combination of solitary bees and managed bees to pollinate the fruit. Research also suggests that pollination by bees improves the quality, taste and nutrient levels in our fruit and vegetables. One-fifth of the vitamin C in our diet comes from insect-pollinated crops such as strawberries.

Simon Potts, Professor of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services at the

University of Reading, said: "Strawberries are just one example of the hundreds of different fruits, vegetables and plants that depend on bees for their survival. Unless we do more to protect these pollinating heroes, it's not just the tennis fans at [Wimbledon](#) that will be the poorer - the health of our countryside and the security of our food supply will be at risk."

Paul De Zylva, Nature Campaigner at Friends of the Earth said: "This research is a warning we must listen to. Without bees, we could pay a fortune for our fruit and the quality would suffer too.

"Unless we make changes to the way we farm and plan our towns and cities it will be game, set and match for [bees](#)."

Provided by University of Reading

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