Botanic Garden
Meise

Report on science café: 'Biodiversiteit en je bord'

1. Topic: the link between bees as pollinators and food security

This topic was choosen for 2 reasons:

- Because it is a highly relevant and actual issue.
- Because Botanic Garden Meise organized the official opening of the 'Week van de Bij', an annual campaign organized by the Flemish Government, with as purpose to sensitize the public on the importance of bees and the problems related to bees.

2. Practical

Time: 17 May 2018, 8 – 10 pm

Location: Oranjery of the Botanic Garden Meise.

Open to everyone

3. Program


Plantentuin Meise

BigPicnic

PROGRAMMA

19u30 – 20u15	Welkom en kwis Wat verdwijnt er van je tafel als de bestuivende insecten verdwijnen?
20u15 – 20u20	Inleiding thema + sprekers (Jutta Kleber, Plantentuin Meise)
20-20 – 20u45	Bestuivende insecten en de Belgische appel- en perenteelt (Jolien Smessaert, KU Leuven)
20u45 – 21u10	Bestuiving, klimaat, biodiversiteit en de toekomst van onze koffie (Piet Stoffelen, Plantentuin Meise)
21u10 – 21u20	PAUZE (drankjes en bijen kijken)
21u20 – 21u40	Bijen, bedreigingen en bescherming (Anne Ronse, Plantentuin Meise)
21u40 – 22u00	Vragen aan de onderzoekers Bespreken kwis + prijsuitreiking!

7:30 – 8:15 pm: Welcome, quiz: what would disappear from your plate if pollinators would disappear?

8:15 – 8:20pm: introduction of speakers

8:20 – 8:45: Speaker Jolien Smessaert (KULeuven Phd student) on the importance of pollinaing insects for the Belgian apple and pear cultivation.
During the talk, people could taste different nectar concentrations.

8:45 – 9:10pm: Speaker Piet Stoffelen (BGM scientist) on 'Biodiversity, climate, pollination and the future of our coffee.
During this talk, participants could taste pure Arabica and pure Canephora coffee and make a guess which coffee was of what type.

9:10 – 9:20: Break, with possibility to observe different coffee plants and beans, taste coffee honey, look at wild bees with a binocular, … or chat and take a honey beer.

9:20 – 9:40 Speaker Anne Ronse (BGM scientist) on 'Bees, threads and protection'.

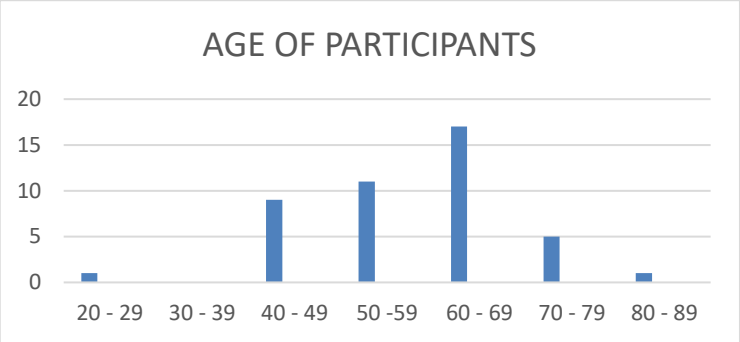
9 :40 : question round + discussion of the quiz

JUTTA KLEBER *EDUCATION OFFICER*
TEL +32 (0)2 260 09 94
JUTTA.KLEBER@BOTANICGARDENMEISE.BE
WWW.BOTANICGARDENMEISE.BE

Botanic Garden
Meise

4. Participants

Approx. 53 participants turned up. The public mainly consisted of older people (age group 60 – 69) and the male – female ratio was 1/1.



The science café was open to everyone. Publicity was made by hanging posters in the Garden and in the village of Meise. 3 groups were invited by mail : Garden's volunteers and free lance educators/guides, and holders of an annual ticket for the Botanic Garden.

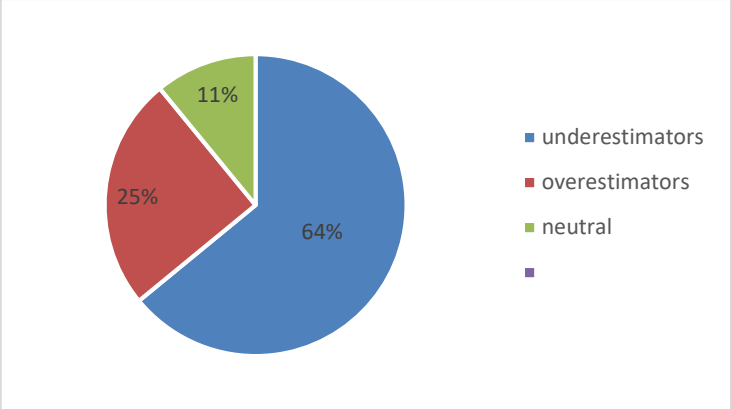
5. Gathered information

Thanks to the quiz, we could gather some information about the question

How profound is the publics knowledge about the relationship between pollinating insects and the food we eat?

Some conclusions:

- Most participants underestimated the role of pollinators for the production of food crops.



- Link between fruits and pollination clear for public:
  - 93% of the participants knew about the link between apple juice and pollinators, 86% about the link between strawberry jam and pollinators.
- However, the link was not obvious for other crops (e.g. coffee, chocolate and margarine containing soy oil).
- There were interesting discussions with participants who took a more holistic apporach, arguing that the disappearance of pollinators would affect the whole ecosystem and therefore all crops.

JUTTA KLEBER *EDUCATION OFFICER*
TEL +32 (0)2 260 09 94
JUTTA.KLEBER@BOTANICGARDENMEISE.BE
WWW.BOTANICGARDENMEISE.BE

- Several beekeepers were present. They had a rather narrow view on the question, focusing on honeybees only and discussing the question based on what they observed with their own bees.
- It isn't always obvious to find a consensus on the importance of insect pollination for a specific crop.

6. Advices to policy makers

Informing and sensitizing the public on following mathers is important:

- The fact that many food crops – and not only fruits – need pollination for a good yield.
- Not only honeybees are important pollinators. Wild bees, bumble bees and other insects play an important role, depending on the crop.
- Why pollinators are threathened (multiple causes) and what can be done to improve their situation.

Furthermore, it looks like more research is still needed on the pollinator – crop relation, the multiple causes of the dying of pollinators and the measurements that can prevent this.

7. Lessons learned about how to organize a science café

From the participants :
Based on evaluation forms, we could conclude that the participants were highly satisfied about this science café. The contribution of the speakers but also the interactive moments (tastings, quiz, looking at beet) were evaluated positively.

We received positive comments from the public about the interesting topic, the pleasant atmoshpere and the variation between listening and action. Negative comments came on the poor technique (beamer and sound), and an overcharged program that didn't leave enough time for questions.
All participants that filled in the evaluation survey would like to participate in a next science café organized by the Botanic Garden.

Personal experiences :
During the preparation of this science café, it became clear to us that the language of the scientist is different from the language of the education worker. What we saw as an 'appealing invitation' scared of some of our scientists because they felt that the invitation made promises that they couldn't fulfill. It took quiet some time to convince them to even participate, but finally everyone was satisfied about the activity.

JUTTA KLEBER *EDUCATION OFFICER*
TEL +32 (0)2 260 09 94
JUTTA.KLEBER@BOTANICGARDENMEISE.BE
WWW.BOTANICGARDENMEISE.BE