# Journal of Plant Protection and Pathology

Journal homepage & Available online at: www.jppp.journals.ekb.eg

# First Survey of Nectar and Pollen Sources for Honeybees in Matrouh Province of West Northern Egypt

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# ABSTRACT



A study was conducted at an apiary belonging to Faculty of Desert and Environmental Agricultural, Matrouh University, and other apiaries in Matrouh province, West northern Egypt. during two successive years (2020 and 2021) to survey nectar and /or pollen sources in Matrouh province. Further, to determine the most important sources of pollen and nectar in the different places of the province. Survey showed that fifty one plant species belonging to 24 families were recorded as pollen and/or nectar floral resources in Matrouh province during the study period. Pollen floral resources in Matrouh province were 48 plants, where the nectar floral resources were 47 plants, they represented 94.1 % and 92.2%, respectively. The most important forages resources of pollen, nectar or both for honeybees in various districts were recorded by area, 9 plants flowering all over the year. The first time survey of bee plant resources in Matrouh province gives a good map to beekeepers for exploration this region as a guide for the suitable periods to transfer their colonies, as a way for more honey production and they can also get benefits from minor pollen sources in various province districts.

Keywords: Flora, Honeybee, Matrouh, Nectar, Pollen.

## INTRODUCTION

Egyptian clover considered the main honey flow source in Egypt through April to June, citrus through March, cotton through July and August (Taha, 2005), and bananas through August and September (Taha, 2007). There is a large gap between successive seasons that negatively affects the life of honeybees (Taha, 2000, 2005).

In the case of scarcity of pollen, the queen is affected and may stop laying eggs, which leads to the weakness of the colonies (Manning, 2008; Taha and Alkahtani 2013). At that time, beekeepers must provide their colonies with food alternatives to pollen and nectar after harvesting (Taha, 2015a). Knowledge of the various confiscations of pollen and nectar make colonies more economic productivity (Carol, 1999; Taha, 2005, 2015b). Honeybee colonies are active throughout the year in tropical and sub-tropical regions due to availability of nectar and pollen sources through the months of the year (Neupane and Thapa, 2005). It is necessary for beekeepers to know the sources of pollen and nectar to plan well their beekeeping for economic productivity. That is why many studies around the world have been conducted to find out the sources of pollen and nectar like, in Brazil (Luz and Barth, 2012); in Costa Rica (Freitas, 1994); in Bulgaria (Atanassova and Lazarova, 2010); in Egypt (Taha, 2000; Helal et al., 2003; Fathy, 2008; Ismail et al., 2013; Abou-Shaara, 2015; Esmael et al., 2016; Taha et al, 2019); in Germany (Köppler et al., 2007; Beil et al., 2008); in India (Singh, 2003); in Iran (Mossadegh, 1990); in Italy (Fortunato et al., 2006); in Mexico (Villanueva, 1989); in Nibal (Paudayal and Gautam, 2011); in Nigeria (Dukku, 2003); in Palestine (Reyahi, 1999); in Philippines (Payawal et al., 1991); in Poland (Wróblewska et al., 2010); in Saudi Arabia (Taha, 2013, 2015a,c; Taha et al., 2016; Adgaba et al., 2017, Al-Kahtani et al., 2017; Taha et al., 2017); in Spain (Seijo et al., 1994); in Turkey (Bilisik et al. 2008); in USA (Baum et al., 2011). However, this

\* Corresponding author. E-mail address: ahgwad@yahoo.com DOI: 10.21608/jppp.2022.131859.1065 is the first report that was interested with surveying the sources of pollen and nectar in one of the border desert provinces, in an attempt to help beekeepers to increase their productivity through transferring their hives to areas rich in these resources.

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### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Matrouh Governorate is located in the far northwest, extending from km 61 west of Alexandria to the Egyptian-Libyan border, 450 km long along the Mediterranean coast, and extending south into the desert at a depth of 400 km south of Siwa Oasis. Its total area is 166563 km<sup>2</sup>, or about 16% of the area of Egypt. Matrouh lies at latitude 31 21` 13 N and longitude 27 14` 14 E. at an altitude of 7m. above sea level. It comprises 8 cities: Al hamam, El Alamein, Al Dubea, Marsa Matrouh, Al Najila, Salloum and Siwa.

This study is the first to survey sources of pollen and nectar for honeybees in Matrouh province during the year in an attempt to guide beekeepers and researchers with the most important information about places of distribution and spread of pollen and nectar sources in the governorate centers and their flowering times as listed in Tables (1).

The present study was carried out at the Faculty of Desert and Environmental Agricultural, Matrouh University, and other apiaries in Matrouh province during two successive years (2020 and 2021).

Recording of all plant species which were observed to be visited by honeybee workers was carried out throughout the two years in the eight regions that represented Matrouh province. Unidentified plant species were collected, transferred to the laboratory, then identified and recorded. Each source was identified by its scientific name and botanical family. Average date of the blooming period of each plant and the value for bees as a source of nectar and/or pollen were recorded.

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During the study in Matrouh Governorate, the most in the difference in the differenc

in the different centers of the governorate, as well as obtaining the area by feddan of each crop and flowering dates.

	Common	Scientific		Flowering	Source			
	name	Name	Family	Period	Pollen	Nectar		
Medicinal, aromatic and ornamental plants								
1	Mint	Mintha spp	Lamiaceae	June to October	-	+		
2	Caraway	Carum carvi	Umbelliferae	April and may	+	+		
3	Roselle	Hibiscus Subdariffa	Malvaceae	November and December	+	+		
4	Basil	Ocimum sp	Lamiaceae	January-December	+	+		
5	Marguerite	Argyranthemum frutescens	Asteraceae	December to April	+	+		
6	Yellow Sweet clover	Melilotus spp	Fabaceae	February to April	+	-		
7	Wild mustard	<i>Brassica</i> nigra	Brassicaceae	March to May	+	+		
8	Black seeds	Nigella sativa	Ranunculaceae	February to April	+	+		
9	Marjoram	Origanum majorana	Lamiaceae	July to August	+	+		
10	Borago	Borago officinalis	Boraginaceae	March - April	+	+		
11	Watermelon	Citrullus lanatus	Cucurbitaceae	April - May	++	++		
12	Squash	Cucurbita pepo	Cucurbitaceae	April to September	+	+		
13	Eggplant	Solanum melongena	Solanaceae	March -December	+	+		
14	Cucumber	Cucumis sativus	Cucurbitaceae	January -October	+	+		
15	Cantaloupe	Cucumis melo var. cantalupensis	Cucurbitaceae	April - may	+	+		
16	Tomato	Solanum lycopersicum	Solanaceae	March -December	+	+		
17	Chili pepper	Capsicum annuum	Solanaceae	March -December	+	+		
18	Muskmelon	Cucumis melo	Cucurbitaceae	April -May	+	+		
19	Cabbage	Brassica oleracea var. capitata	Brassicaceae	February - April	+	+		
20	Artichoke	Cynara cardunculus var. scolymus	Asteraceae	August - November	+	-		
21	Cucumis	Cucumis melo flexuosus	Cucurbitaceae	January - October	+	+		
22	Okra	Abelmoschus esculentus	Malvaceae	June - September	-	+		
23	Pumpkin	Cucurbita maxima	Cucurbitaceae	August -September	+	+		
24	bean	Phaseolus vulgaris	Fabaceae	September - October	+	+		
25	Carrot	Daucus carota	Apiaceae	March - April	+	+		
26	Pea	Pisum sativum	Fabaceae	October - January	+	+		
27	Cauliflower	Brassica oleracea var. botrvtis	Brassicaceae	March -May	+	+		
28	Faba bean	Vicia faba	Fabaceae	January -March	++	++		
29	Onion	Ailium cepa	Amarvllidaceae	May -June	+	+		
	fnjit crops							
30	Apricot	Prunus armeniaca	Rosaceae	February - March	+	+		
31	Apple	Malus sp	Rosaceae	March - April	+	+		
32	Peach	Prunus persica	Rosaceae	February - March	++	++		
33	Plum	Prunus domestica	Rosaceae	February - March	+	+		
34	Date palm	Phoenix dactylifera	Arecaceae	March - April	++	-		
35	Mango	Mangifera sp.	Anacardiaceae	March - April	+	+		
36	Carob	Ceratonia siliaua	Fabaceae	September -October	+	+		
37	Barbary fig	Opuntia ficus-indica	Cactaceae	April - May	+	+		
38	Persimmon	Diospyros kaki	Ebenaceae	July - August	+	+		
39	fig	Ficus carica	Moraceae	June -September	-	+		
40	Olive	Olea europaea	Oleaceae	April -May	+	+		
41	Almond	Prunus dulcis	Rosaceae	December - March	+	+		
42	Grape	Vitis spp	Vitaceae	March -May	+	+		
43	Orange	Citrus sinensis	Rutaceae	March - April	+	++		
44	Tangerine	Citrus nobilis	Rutaceae	March - April	+	++		
45	Guava	Psidium guaiava	Myrtaceae	May - July	+	++		
46	pomegranate	Punica granatum	Lythraceae	March - April	+	+		
	Field Cron							
47	Corn	Zea mavs	Poaceae	June -November	++	-		
48	Sesame	Sesamum indicum	Pedaliaceae	July - August	++	++		
49	Alfalfa	Medicago sativa	Fabaceae	March - November	++	++		
50	Sunflower	Helianthus annuus	Asteraceae	July - August	++	++		
51	Egyptian clover	Trifolium alexandrinum	Fabaceae	April - June	++	++		

Table 1	Sources of	nollen and	nectar flor	al in Matrouh	nrovince d	hiring 2020	0 and 2021
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\*\* Major source. \* Minor source. - Not source.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Results**:

As it stands in Table (1), 51 plant species belonging to 24 families were recorded as pollen and/or nectar floral sources in Matrouh province during two the successive seasons (2020 and 2021). The medicinal, aromatic and ornamental plants were

represented by 19.6% of total surveyed plants, each pollen and nectar sources had 90% and 80% of them. The vegetable crops were act 37.3% of the general total plants surveyed, in which the pollen sources were more than the nectar sources, represented 94.7% and 68.4%, respectively. On the other hand the fruit crops were 17 plant belonging to 11 families representing 33.3% of the total. Pollen floral sources were 14 plants belonging to nine

Families with 82.3 % of total of fruit crops, but the nectar floral sources were 11 plants belonging to nine families with 70.6 % of total of fruit crops.

Data illustrated in Table (1) show that the field crops were five plants belonging to four families. They had 9.8% of total survey and pollen sources were more than nectar sources. The highest flowering number of plants were recorded in summer season with 34 plants, but the lowest season in flowering was the winter that represented by six plants. Screening data showed that the pollen floral sources in Matrouh province were 48 plants, where the nectar floral sources were 47 plants, both represented 94.1% and 92.2%, respectively.

Data in Table (2) clearly represent the most important forages sources of pollen, nectar or both for honeybees, and also show that there were nine plants flowering in four seasons. Based on such results, beekeepers can move their colonies to the cultivation centers depending on the obtained data to increase the honeybee production.

Table 2. The most important sources of pollen, nectar or both and their cultivation centers in Matrouh province, and flowering dates in 2020 – 2021

Dlant	Contons	Area /	Flowering	Seeger	Sources		Crop
riant	Centers	Feddan	dates	Season	Pollen	Nectar	type
Mint	Al hamam, Matrouh, Salloum and Siwa	108	June to October	Spring/Summer	-	+	Vegetables
Faba bean	Al hamam, El Alamein, Al Dubea and Siwa	5528	January -March	Winter	++	++	Vegetables
Squash	Al hamam, Matrouh, El Alamein and Siwa	1387	April to September	Spring	+	+	Vegetables
Date palm	All the eight centers	10670	March - April	Spring	++	-	Fruit crop
Olive	All the eight centers	39616	April -May	Spring	+	+	Fruit crop
Alfalfa	Al hamam and Siwa	3508	March - November	Summer/Fall	++	++	Field crop
Egyptian clover	Al hamam	4077	April - June	Early summer	++	++	Field crop
Corn	Al hamam and El Alamein	11603	June -November	Summer	++	-	Field crop
Sesame	Al hamam	2347	July - August	Summer/Fall	++	++	Field crop
++ 3.4. ****************							

\*\* Major source. \* Minor source. - Not source.

#### Discussion

The survey of bee plant sources to beekeepers for the first time to exploration this region to guide them the suitable period to move their colonies for more economical honey production and they can also get benefit from scattered pollen in Matrouh province is a good map sources in various governorate centers.

Data showed that 51 plant species were visited by honey bees (Apis mellifera L.). Workers can collect pollen from 48 plants, and can collect nectar from 47 plants all over the year. Previous studies in Egypt cleared that there were thirty-nine bee forages belonging to fifteen families in Kafr-Elshiekh district (Taha, 2005; Fathy, 2008), 26 pollen plants in 15 families in Dakhalia, 24 pollen sources belonging to 16 families in Fayoum (Ismaail et al, 2013), and 65 bee plants belonging to 25 plant families in Alexandria and El-Beheira provinces (Esmael et al., 2016). Abou-Shaara (2015) surveyed the pollen, nectar or both in Egypt andhe found that 91 plant species belonging to 85 families were suitable for honeybees as floral sources, whereasTaha (2017) found that 69 plant species belonging to 33 families recorded as nectar sources, and eighty two sources belonging 36 families recoded as pollen sources in Kafr El-shiekh.

Because there was few studies done in Matrouh province on honey bee plants, more investigations needs to provide deep understanding of Matrouh honeybees floral resources.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the obtained data, it could be concluded that, beekeepers can move their colonies to the olive and date palm cultivation in all districts of Matrouh province during spring season, alfalfa, Egyptian clover and corn cultivation in El Hmam, Al Alamin and Siwa districts during summer and fall seasons, sesame in El Hmam district during summer and fall and faba bean cultivation in El Hmam, Al Alamin, Al Dabea and Siwa districts during winter season to increase the honey yield and improve the colony performance.

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# الحصر الأول لمصادر الرحيق وحبوب اللقاح لنحل العسل بمحافظة مطروح شمال غرب مصر أحمد عبد المولى جواد 2،1 و محمد فرج زوره1 1 كلية الزراعة الصحراوية والبينية – جامعة مطروح 2 معهد بحوث وقاية النباتات – مركز البحوث الزراعيه – الجيزه

الكلمات الدالة: نحل العسل - مطروح - الرحيق - حبوب اللقاح

أجريت الدراسة بمناحل كلية الزراعة الصحراوية والبيئية بجامعة مطروح ومناحل أخرى بمحافظة مطروح شمل غرب مصر خلال سنتين متتاليتين من الدراسة (2020 و 2021) لتحديد مصادر الرحيق و حبوب اللقاح في محافظة مطروح. كما تم تحديد أهم مصادر حبوب اللقاح والرحيق أو كليهما في مناطق المحافظة المختلفة. تم تسجيل 51 نوعا نباتيا تنتمي إلى 24 عائلة كمصدر لحبوب اللقاح والرحيق في محافظة مطروح خلال فترة الدراسة. وبلغت مصادر حبوب اللقاح والرحيق أو كليهما في مناطق المحافظة المختلفة. تم تسجيل 51 نوعا نباتيا تنتمي إلى 24 عائلة كمصدر لحبوب اللقاح والرحيق في محافظة مطروح خلال فترة الدراسة. وبلغت مصادر حبوب اللقاح في محافظة مطروح 48 نبات ، وكانت مصادر الرحيق 74 نبات مثل 19.4%. و 2020؟ على التوالي. تم تسجيل أهم المصادر من حبوب اللقاح أو الرحيق أو كليهما لن على مناطق المحافظة حيث وحذ العلم. يعد حصر مصادر الرحيق وحبوب اللقاح المورة في مراكز المحيل أو كليهما لنحل العسل في مختلف مراكز المحافظة حيث وجد و نباتات تز هر في 4 مواسم على مدار العلم. يعد حصر مصادر الرحيق وحبوب اللقاح امن حبوب اللقاح أو الرحيق أو كليهما لنحل العسل في مختلف مراكز المحافظة العلم. يعد حصر مصادر الرحيق وحبوب اللقاح المحروح مثابة خريطة جيدة لمربي النحل لأول مرة لاستكشاف هذه المنطقة لإر شادهم للفترات المناسية لنقل طوائفم من أجل إنتاج عسل أكثر كما يمكنهم الاستفادة من مصادر حبوب اللقاح أو مراكز المحافظة المختلفة.