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Sustainable Dog Toys and Treats Help Save the Bees

Some proceeds go to plant wildflower habitats.

By [Mary Jo DiLonardo](#) | Published November 26, 2021 10:00AM EST



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Project Hive Pet Company



Treat your pup. [Save the bees.](#)

That's the agenda behind [Project Hive](#), a pet product company with a sustainable, environmental mission.

The company sells bee-themed toys and treats made using thoughtful, quality materials and ingredients. A portion of profits is used to [plant wildflowers](#) to restore dwindling habitats for declining bee populations. ¹



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Co-founders and spouses Melissa Rappaport Schiffman and Jim Schiffman say they saw the opportunity in the pet industry for a mission-driven pet company. They had always admired Patagonia, a company that works to protect the planet. And both say they were affected by the Earthwatch Institute's 2008 declaration that bees are the most [important species](#) on the planet.

They chose saving bees as their mission.



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“[Bees pollinate](#) about a third of our food—particularly delicious eats like berries, apples, and almonds. ² We've personally witnessed and benefited from the work of the bees in our garden year after year,” Melissa Rappaport Schifman tells Treehugger.

“But it goes beyond that. The reasons that bee populations are declining turn out to be the same problems with many of our broader sustainability issues: industrial monoculture farming, widespread use of harmful insecticides and herbicides, and climate change. By helping bees, we are helping our planet.”

The company makes several dog toys, including hive-shaped bouncing, floating, interactive toys, as well as a ball, disc, and a fetch stick. The toys are made in the U.S. and are free of BPA, latex, and phthalates. They are recyclable (No. 7) in some cases or can be sent back to the company to be ground up and made into new toys.

“By doing this, we are demonstrating how to participate in the circular



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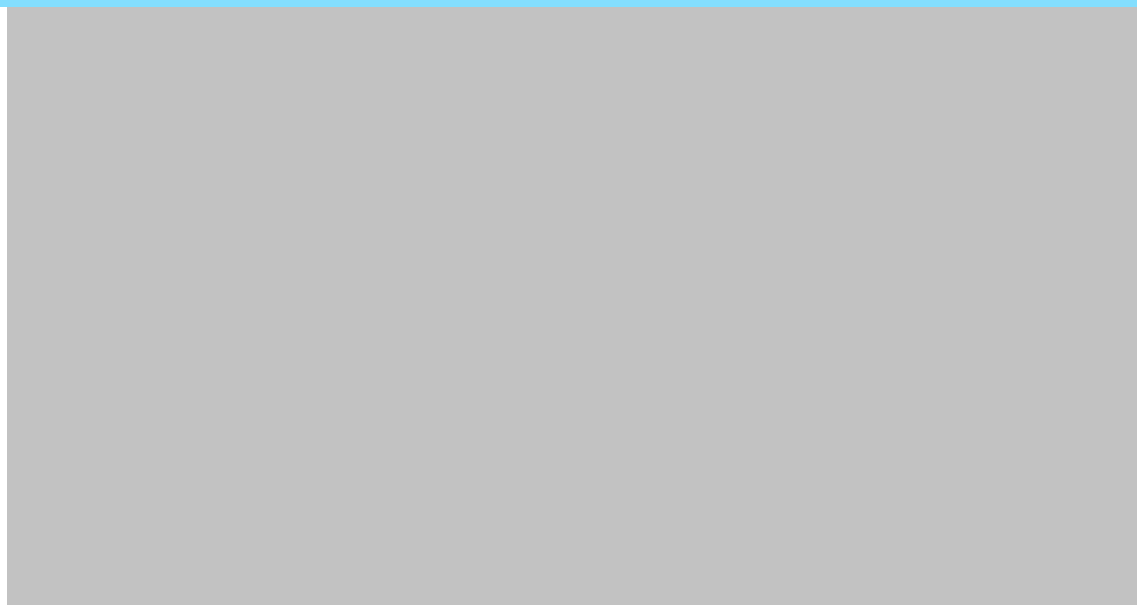
Certified for our 2021 operations. While making all of our toys and treats in the U.S. helps reduce freight emissions, we are still mindful of the emissions created by shipping products around the U.S. and are working to mitigate and offset those.”

The company sells training, chew, and stick treats. The treats are made in the U.S. and have no artificial colors or flavors. They are made with organic honey and are Non-GMO Project Verified.

“This certification is essential to our brand and mission because the industrial agricultural practices that support GMOs contribute to unhealthy habitat for bees,” says Jim Schiffman.

“Concerning ingredients, one of the first health concerns we addressed was whether we needed to have meat-based dog treats. Animal protein is much more carbon- and water-intensive than plant proteins. It's also difficult (and expensive) to source organic meat from humanely treated animals. So, we decided to launch with a line of 5 vegetarian treats--made with pea protein and ground peanuts, with a touch of organic honey from our worker bee friends!”

How Bees Benefit



Project Hive Pet Company

Most of the treats and the toys are hive-shaped or feature honeycomb patterns to raise awareness and remind pet owners to think about bees.

“Compare that to say, combating climate change—what cute fun aesthetic is associated with carbon emissions?” Melissa says. “So, if the question is, ‘What does saving bees have to do with dogs?’ It's really about embracing life. Saving bees brings more beauty and joy into the world—just like dogs do.”

Project Hive donates 1% of gross sales to The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund, a non-profit organization that helps establish large swathes of



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impact on replenishing our land to help nourish and sustain the bees," Melissa says.

The company's goal is to help establish 50 million square feet of wildflower habitat by 2025. Project Hive launched its website and began selling through other online retailers earlier this year and just started selling in retail stores in late October. So far, they've funded five projects in four states for a total of 15.6 acres that will be planted this fall. ¹

"As we grow, our impact on healthy habitat and bees will grow. And we'll be transparent about it, monitoring our progress through annual impact reporting," Jim says.

Feedback has been good so far, the co-founders say with responses from shoppers applauding the sustainability and conservation angle of the products.

But Jim says that they've noticed people are changing how they shop.

"They want to purchase with a purpose. When you have so many choices in the marketplace, why not support an authentic, transparent, public benefit company that positively impacts our planet?"

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