

Activists love to cite Einstein quote that without bees, life on Earth would soon perish. Snopes fact checking finds ideologues made it up

In 2002, Snopes came across a quote about bees' importance to the global ecosystem that the Nobel Prize-winning theoretical physicist [Albert Einstein](#) supposedly once said or wrote, reading: "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would only have four years of life left."

One tried-and-true method for getting people to pay attention to words is to put them into the mouth of a well-known, respected figure whom the public perceives as being an expert in the subject at hand.

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Did [Einstein sagely foresee](#) an environmental crisis we're only just now beginning to notice?

To answer that last question (without denying the importance of the honeybees), we have to consider the related question, "Did Einstein really say this?" First off, searches of Einstein's writings and speeches and public statements, as well as of (scholarly) compilations of Einstein quotations, reveal nary a reference to the "four years" phrase or any other statement mentioning bees (save for a brief comparison between humans and colony insects such as ants and bees).

...

The best answer probably lies in examining the context in which the earliest citations of this putative quote (that we've found so far) appeared: a January 1994 political protest staged by European beekeepers over the issues of competition from lower-priced honey imports, artificially high prices for sugar (used as winter feed for bees), and a proposed reduction of tariffs that would make imported honey products even cheaper.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)