

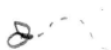
Interesting facts about bees

There are lots of books and websites that describe bees: their lifecycle, colonies, and anatomy. The list below contains just some of the lesser known facts about these fascinating insects:

🐝 There are 20,000 different kinds of bees in the world and most of them are solitary: they live by themselves and raise their young alone. Honeybees, however, live in colonies that may contain as many as 60 thousand bees.

🐝 Honeybees can be divided into 3 groups:

- Workers are all female. Each bee will take on different duties depending on her age. Young worker bees do the house work: cleaning, nursing the larvae, keeping the hive at the right temperature, carrying food and making wax. Slightly older bees guard the nest and sting any bees, wasps, or other insects that are not part of their colony. The oldest bees become foragers and collect nectar and pollen.
- Drones are all male. They have only one function: to mate once with the Queen bee, after which they die. They cannot feed themselves because their tongues are too short to reach the nectar inside flowers.
- The Queen Bee is the biggest bee because she is fed on a rich substance called royal jelly. She mates



once in her life and is fertilized by about 20 drones. She stores the sperm in her body and uses it to lay 1500 eggs a day.

- 🐝 Foragers travel distances of up to 2 miles to collect nectar and pollen. If a bee finds a good source of food, she returns to the colony and does a little dance to communicate with other bees where to go. A round dance is done to show that food is close by. A waggle dance communicates the distance and the direction of a more distant food source.
- 🐝 A bee's brain is the size of a sesame seed, yet it is capable of complex calculations involving distance and foraging efficiency. Bees navigate using the sun and never get lost.
- 🐝 They need pollen to get protein. They carry the pollen back to the hive in little pollen baskets on their legs. They also sip nectar from flowers which is stored in the bee's honey stomach.
- 🐝 When a forager bee gets home to the colony, she transfers the nectar into the mouth of a house bee where it mixes with enzymes (bee spit). Eventually when there is the right mix of nectar and enzymes, it gets deposited in a wax cell. House bees then fan the cell to evaporate the water. Only when it's the correct consistency for honey does it get capped with a layer of wax.
- 🐝 A single bee working all its life will collect enough nectar to make a twelfth of a teaspoon of honey.
- 🐝 Honey does not easily decompose. Honey found in an Egyptian tomb was still edible after 3000 years.
- 🐝 Flowers need bees for pollination as much as bees need flowers. Flowers use fragrance, color, and an electrical charge to draw bees to them.

