

6 Honeybees

When the warm weather arrives, the outdoors blossoms with activity. Birds will sing until dark. Children spend hours playing outside. And the sound of buzzing bees is often heard.

Bees look innocent, but many people are still afraid of them. Bees can give painful, and to some people, fatal stings. But they don't sting unless they are scared or hurt. A bee's stinger is its only means of self-defense. A bee sting may hurt a person, but the bee will die a few hours after using its stinger. The bee's stinger, which is attached to its nervous system, is forced into its victim's body. The bee can't function without a stinger and dies.

When you are stung by a bee, poison enters your body. Immediately scrape off the stinger. Letting it stay in your body will allow more poison to enter. You may feel pain and have some swelling, but you probably won't be uncomfortable for long. A few people, however, are very sensitive to bee stings. Just one sting could cause death. These people must be treated by a doctor right away.

Although there are 10,000 different kinds of bees, the honeybee is the most useful to people. Honeybees make wax and honey. The wax is used to make such products as lipsticks and candles. The honey is good for cooking and for making foods sweet.

When honeybees fly from flower to flower, they help people and the plant. Many fruits and vegetables would die out if bees did not help fertilize flowers. Bees gather nectar and pollen from flowers. They make honey from the nectar and use the honey and pollen as food. Honeybees have a separate honey stomach to carry nectar to the nest.

Honeybees live and work together in large groups. These groups are called colonies, and may have thousands of members. One honeybee may live just a few weeks or months. But a colony may go on living for years. As a group, the honeybees can do many things. They gather water and food. They build homes. They store honey and pollen and eat it when cold weather sets in. Honeybees can even air-condition their hive.

Even though people have studied honeybees' habits for hundreds of years, much is still a mystery. We don't know how the bees know when to work, or how they decide to build more honeycomb. We do know that they are highly organized creatures.

Recalling Facts

1. Bees can give painful
 - a. stings.
 - b. rashes.
 - c. bites.
2. Some people are very sensitive to
 - a. milk.
 - b. poison ivy.
 - c. bee stings.
3. Honeybees make
 - a. wax and honey.
 - b. wax and pollen.
 - c. pollen and honey.
4. The groups honeybees live in are called
 - a. communities.
 - b. organizations.
 - c. colonies.
5. Honeybees know how to
 - a. find shortcuts to flowers.
 - b. air-condition their hive.
 - c. fly in the rain.

Understanding the Passage

6. The poison in a bee's sting
 - a. can kill some people.
 - b. doesn't affect children.
 - c. is easily replaced.
7. Some types of bees
 - a. have nests in mud.
 - b. make lipsticks and candles.
 - c. do not make honey.
8. A single honeybee could not
 - a. build a beehive.
 - b. fly from flower to flower.
 - c. sting a person.
9. A honeybee has more than one
 - a. stomach.
 - b. stinger.
 - c. mother.
10. People don't understand how bees make
 - a. homes.
 - b. decisions.
 - c. honey.