

The Life of the Bee



A honey bee visiting blossom

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Honey bees are social insects. By working together the survival of all members of the colony are improved. There are three different sorts of bee in one colony each with their own work.



This is the queen bee. There is only one queen bee in a colony. She is the mother of the hive. Her work is to lay eggs that will develop into new bees. She can lay 1000 eggs every day at some times of year.



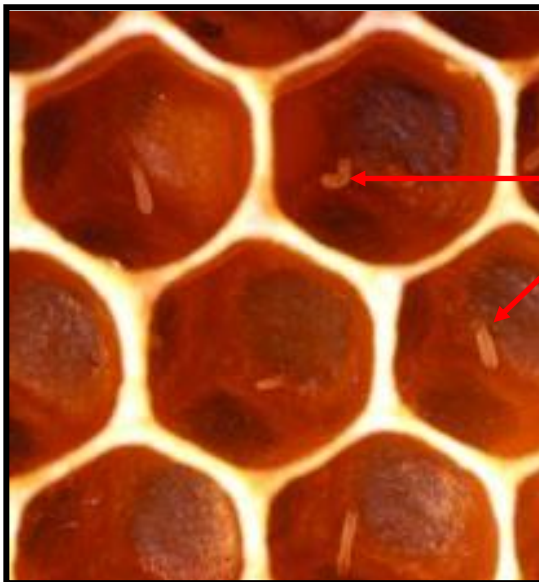
This is the male bee or drone. His only job is to mate with a young queen. There are about 500 drones in a hive when there is plenty of food. They are driven out during the dearth period.



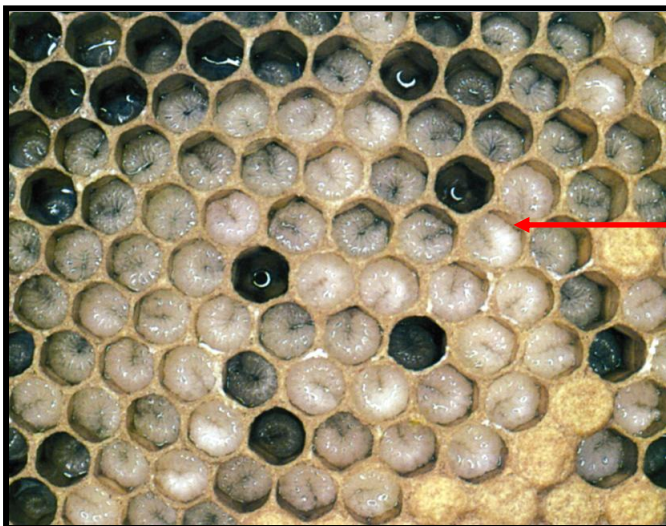
This is a worker bee. She is a female but cannot lay eggs. She does all the work in the hive. There may be as many as 40,000 workers in the main honey gathering season.



Workers make wax from their body to build honeycomb.

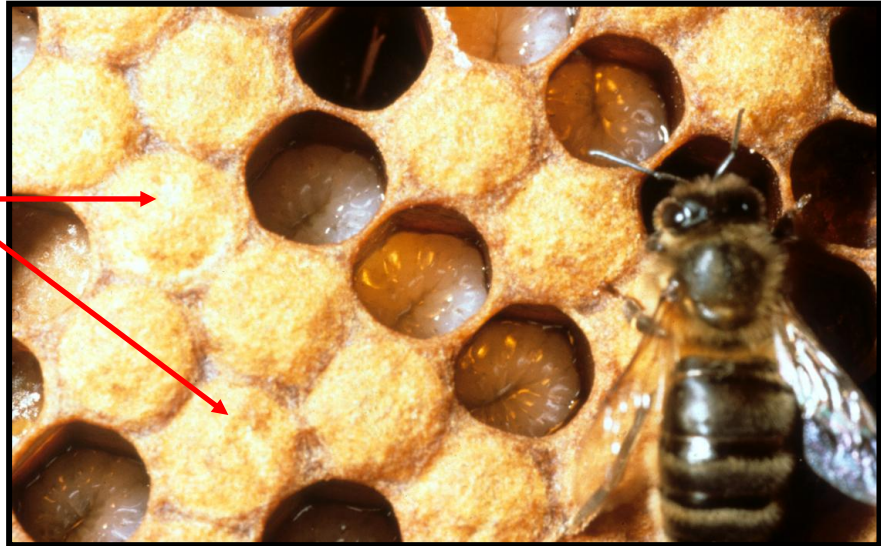


The queen lays an egg in each honeycomb cell.



The eggs hatch and turn into larvae.

The larvae are sealed into the cells to pupate.



A new worker bee emerges from the cell.

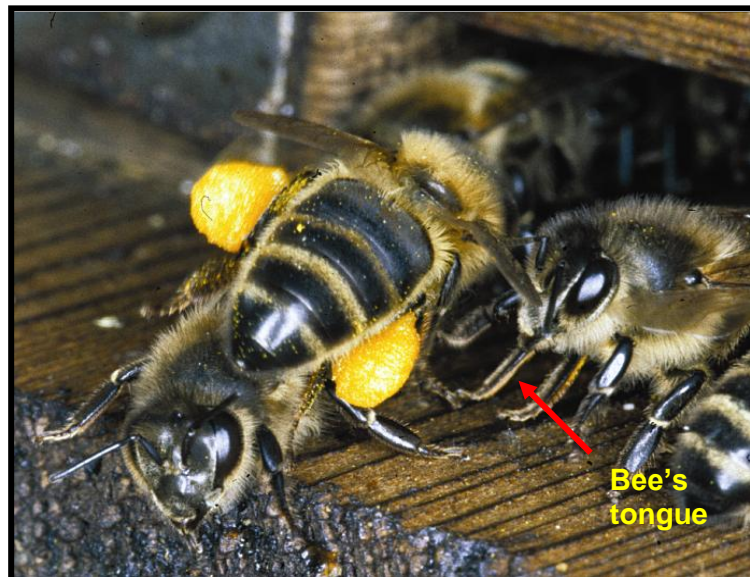


Worker bees leave the hive to visit flowers, collecting pollen and nectar to make honey. This worker bee is collecting nectar from Eucalyptus.

Bees improve the crops from mango, coffee, citrus, guava, and many other fruits.



This worker has collected pollen and nectar. One of the bees at the hive entrance has its tongue out to test the quality of the nectar.



Bee's tongue



Workers store pollen and nectar in the honeycombs.

Flowers can have different coloured pollen.



Bees fan their wings to remove water from the nectar and to spread scent messages.

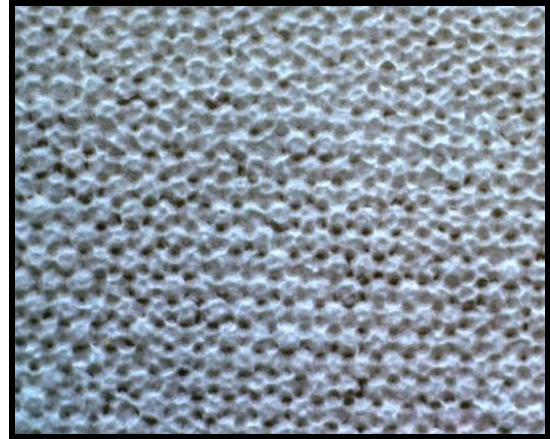
This worker bee is exposing a scent gland, which calls other bees to join it.

These worker bees are sharing food and pheromones.

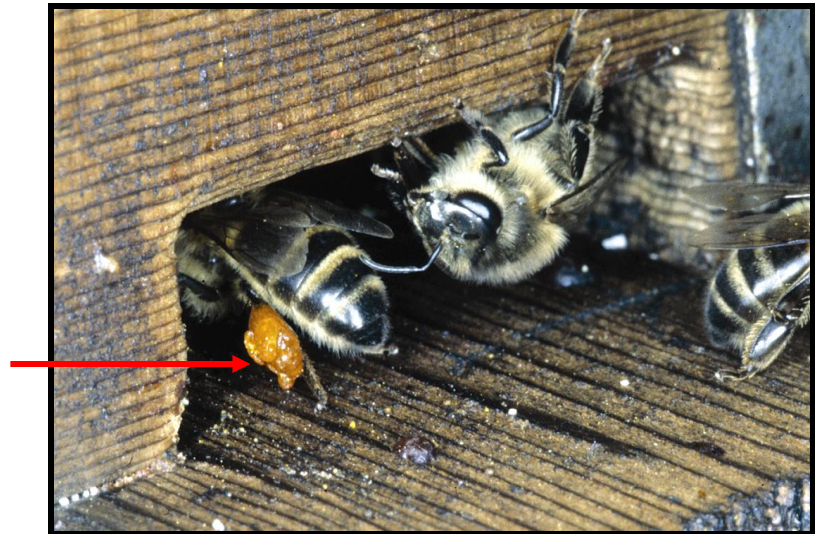


The workers are dancing to communicate the quality and direction of the nectar source.

The worker bees have capped this honey perfectly. It is quality honey ready for harvesting.



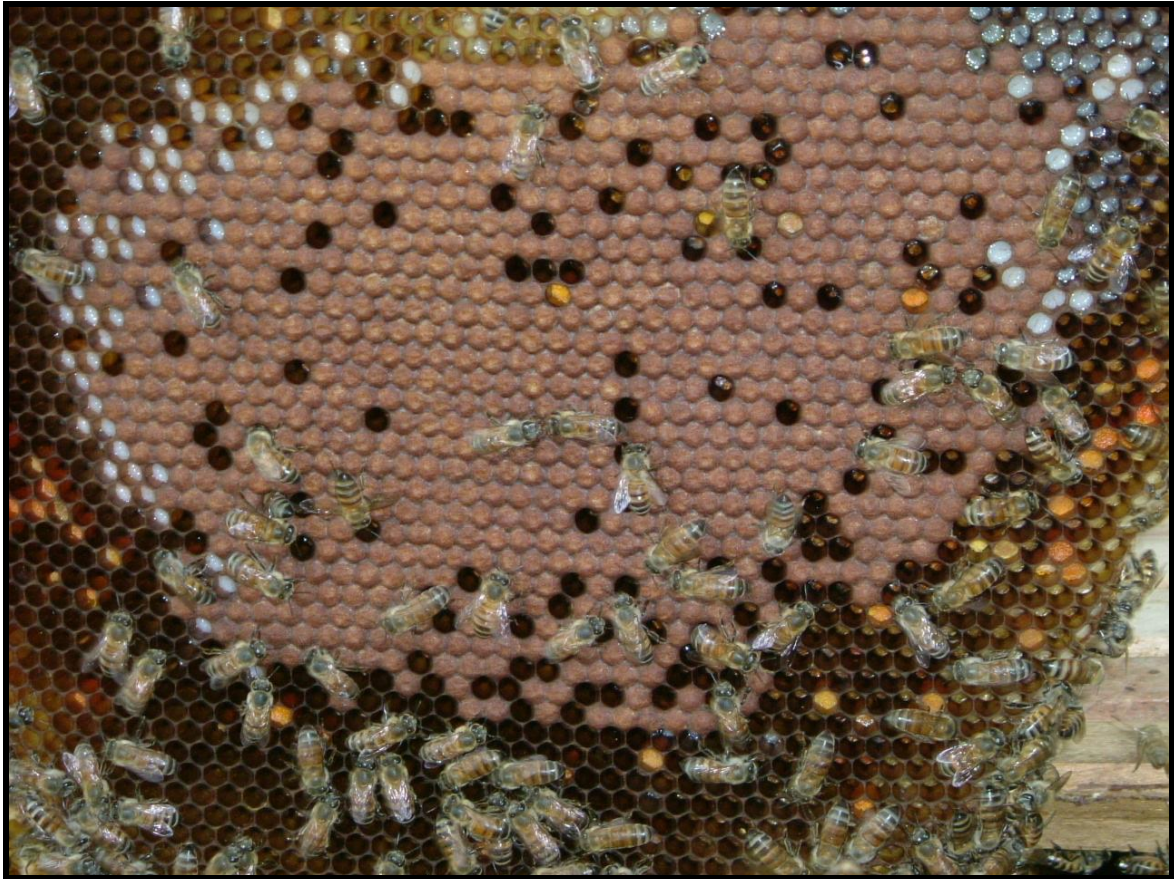
These workers are bringing propolis into the hive. It is a sticky resin that they collect from trees. Propolis is used to seal cracks and to keep the hive clean.



This worker is guarding the entrance. Worker bees sting to defend their home. They die after they sting so they are reluctant to do this.



Only workers sting. If they do they will die. Bees do not sting without cause.



Can you identify the things on this comb?

Look for:

- **worker bees**
- **sealed worker brood**
- **larvae in unsealed cells**
- **empty cells**
- **a few cells with fresh nectar**
- **cells containing pollen**