

# Sweet as a Bee

WHO LIVES HERE?

SUMMER



## WHAT'S THE Big Idea?

### Community Interdependence

## Enduring Understandings

- All living things are part of communities.
  - Honey bees are social insects and have very specific jobs in their bee community.
  - Honey bees depend on each other to survive.
- In a bee community, there are a queen bee, drones, and worker bees.

## Objectives

- Children show interest and curiosity in an insect they might have considered “bad.”
- Children demonstrate the jobs that honey bees in a hive do.
- Children cultivate an understanding of how honey bees help humans through pollination and producing honey and beeswax.
- Children role-play as honey bees.

## Directions

1. Start a discussion about honey bees. How many children see honey bees as a threat? Everyone will want to share bee sting stories. Inquire if anyone thinks bees might be helpful? Talk about those responses.
2. Read *Are You A Bee?* by Judy Allen and revisit the question, “Are honey bees helpful?”

## Vocabulary (Buzz... Buzz...)

**Queen:** Head of the hive who is busy laying up to 15,000 eggs a day.

**Drones:** Male honey bees whose only job is to mate with the queen bee when she leaves the hive to start a new one. In the interim, the drones hang around in the hive, being waited on by the female worker bees.

**Nurses:** Honey bees who make food, called *brood food*, for the young larvae or baby bees.

**Guards:** Honey bees who hang out at the entrance of the hive to smell every insect coming in the hive. If the smell or *pheromone* is not the correct smell, the guard bees protect the hive and drive the wrong-smelling insect out of the hive.

## Materials

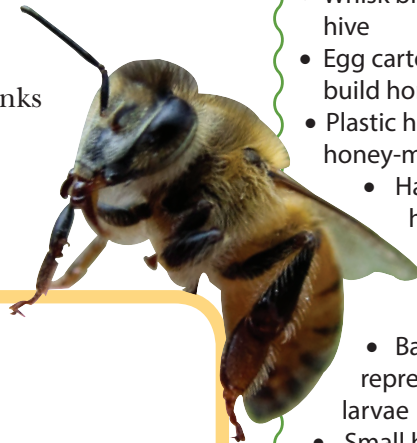
- ***Are You A Bee?*** by Judy Allen

Props for honey bees:

- **queen:** paper crown
- **drones:** several bow ties or neckties
- **larvae:** old white socks, stuffed (The larvae look like small, fat white worms.)

Assortment of the following props for all the **worker bees:**

- **nurses:** several white, paper nurse caps
- **guards:** two or three heavy cardboard cones with string to tie around the waist
- Whisk broom to clean the hive
- Egg cartons with which to build honeycombs
- Plastic honey jars for honey-making bees
  - Hand fans to cool the hive
  - Trays for the bees who wait on the queen
  - Baby bottles to represent feeding the larvae
- Small baskets for the worker bees who leave the hive in search of pollen and nectar



## Bee Song!

Sung to the tune of  
"Do Your Ears Hang Low?"

I'm a honey bee,  
Pollen baskets on my knees  
And a stinger on my tail  
So you're afraid of me.  
But I'd rather gather nectar,  
I'm an excellent collector,  
I'm a honey bee.

### Extensions

- ***Busy, Buzzy Bee*** by Karen Wallace
- ***The Beeman*** by Laurie Krebs
- If possible, get materials to build bee hives from beekeepers or beekeeping supply stores, such as: <http://beekeeping.glorybee.com>. Allow children to put on beekeeper equipment and put together supers and frames.
- Invite a beekeeper to your classroom to explain her job.
- Have bee costumes for children to wear during dramatic play:
  - **wings:** cardboard or cloth
  - **compound eyes:** sunglasses
  - **thorax:** cardboard with string to loop over head with six legs attached with velcro,
  - **stinger:** a cardboard cone tied around the waist sticking out over child's buttocks.

3. Discuss the various roles a bee plays in its short lifetime. Show the children the props and ask if anyone would like to play bees and beekeeper.
4. Distribute props. Step back and let the beehive get humming! Encourage "bees" to switch roles as bees don't stay in the same job for long. There can only be one queen and that can "bee" tricky to navigate. Have your students determine a way to share the responsibilities in the hive.
5. Process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

### Discussion Questions

- What was one of your jobs as a bee that you enjoyed?
- How are bees like humans?
- How are bees a community?

