Clinch Valley Beekeepers Association

Volume 14, Number 10 October 2023 Sherri Hudson, editor

EMAIL WEBSITE FACEBOOK

Clinch Valley Beekeepers
meet every 3rd Thursday
at 7:00 pm:
Treadway Fire Hall
189 Highway 131
Treadway, TN 37881

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The Design of the Honey Dipper: from Primitive to Practical

Storing Wet Honey Supers The Best & Easiest Way

NEXT MEETING

DATE

Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023
doors open at 6:30
meeting starts at 7:00
potluck dinner 7:30
lesson/presentation 7:45
Treadway Fire Hall
189 Hwy 131
Treadway, TN 37881

FOOD THEME

Comfort Foods Potluck

Everyone loves a hearty plate of comfort food, so give the people what they want with a comfort food potluck. Comfort foods are traditional and often provide a nostalgic feeling to the diners. Fried chicken, green bean casserole, baked beans, mashed potatoes, mac 'n' cheese, and dinner rolls will be the top dishes. Don't forget apple pie for dessert.

SPEAKER

The speaker will be Wade GeFellers of Heritage & Habitat. A company founded on a passion for properly managing the land, promoting healthy wildlife populations and ecosystems, and helping people. Heritage & Habitat LLC prides itself in assisting landowners manage their land, encourages the sharing of great outdoor experiences, and is dedicated to preserving our hunting and land ownership heritage.

LAST MEETING

- Club president Lloyd Snelson opened the meeting with a prayer.
- Treasurer Lynda Eskola read the treasurers report and it was accepted.
- New members and visitors introduced themselves.
- Secretary Sherri Hudson introduced the club t-shirt/sweatshirt campaign and passed out order forms.
- Lloyd talked about the three festivals that the club will be setting up at booth. Sherri sent around a sign-up sheet for volunteers.
- Vice president David Sams asked if anyone was interested in being a delegate to be representative at TVA.
- Lloyd asked for nominations for officers and board members. Elections will be during the October meeting.

SPEAKER NOTES

Bodie Osborne has been around bees since he was 6 years old. Bodie spoke to us about **Preparing Our Hives for Winter**. Some of the points he made are as follows:

- After labor day the bees will cap comb but won't make new comb. Sometimes late in the season they might not even cap the honey because they are going to use it.
- Start now for next year.
- Hives might make it through winter only to die in March or April from starvation.
- Start feeding now! But be careful and watch out for robbing. He recommends using a 5-gallon bucket, add 25# of white sugar, 1¾ gallon hot water, Honey Bee Healthy (which you can purchase from the bee club), stir until sugar is dissolved. Fill the bucket with straw and shove a stick into the bucket that protrudes out the top. Place the on the bucket leaning open by the stick and place a brick or rock on the lid to keep it from flying off. Set the bucket about 200 feet from your hives. Feed until they won't take anymore. Don't worry about freezing because you'll stop feeding in this manner before that. Start this process again in February.

pic by member Fay Kleppinger

- He recommends insulating with foam insulation the telescoping cover. Moisture collects under them if they aren't insulated, freezes, then the next day wen sun is out it melts and adds wet moisture into the hive.
- Insulating the outside of the hive will help protect the hive during the winter and aid in a faster spring start up. Be sure there is top ventilation.

MESSAGE from the SECRETARY

Hello Everyone,
Festival time again. I'd like to thank all the volunteers who worked in the CVBA booths at the Sneedville Fall Festival and the Rogersville Heritage Days. We still have Mountain Makin's at the Rose Center in Morristown the 4th weekend of this month.

Speaking Engagements: CVBA gets many requests from schools and community organizations to provide speakers about honeybees, but we often cannot fulfill these due to lack of volunteers. If you like talking about hone bees, please sign up to be on our speaker list by emailing cvbanewsletter@gmail.com

Please return library materials! Many items are missing from our library. Please return your CVBA library items by bringing them to the monthly meeting or mailing them to: Clinch Valley Beekeepers Association, PO Box 736, Sneedville, TN 37869 ***Thank You!*** *Sherri*

HIVE CALENDAR

Adapted from the Cookeville Beekeeping Calendar

TN BEEKEEPING ANNUAL CALENDAR
Of course, all dates are approximate, and dependent on weather…
Remove any excess frames or supers – reduce hives down to the size that you want them to be for winter. Continue feeding light hives. Brood production and hive populations will continue to diminish.
Do your last inspections while the weather is fair – try not to set off robbing when you open hives. Options are limited if you find any hives that are in trouble. Killing frost usually happens in late October. Install mouse guards and configure hives for winter – top ventilation – but don't accidentally open a back door for robbers or wax moths.

BEE FUNNY

What does a bee use to style her hair?
(answer on last page)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mountain
Makin's at the Rose Center in Morristown the 4th weekend of this month.

HAPPINGINGS

As you read this newsletter, you can see that we go through many photographs for each issue.
We would love to have **YOUR PHOTOS** of your bee yard in all seasons, or as you are inspecting.
Send them as attachments to: cvbanewsletter@gmail.com
If they have people in them, please identify with names.

NO PARTICIPATION

APIARY MANAGEMENT

Researched by
Sherri Hudson

Storing Wet Honey Supers - The Best & Easiest Way

Written by Sophia Roa in Beekeeping

After honey extraction, what remains is the accumulation of gooey, sticky frames.
These uncapped comb frames, sometimes referred to as "wet" frames or supers, are a storage nightmare until they are completely free of any honey residue.

Honey supers or frames must be completely dry, with all the honey removed, before you can store them. Return the supers to your strong hives and allow the bees to clear away any residue. After a few days, collect them and store them in securely sealed boxes for the winter.

Honeybees are more than willing to carry out the task of cleaning honey supers. This is a fantastic technique that preserves honey and makes the job of the beekeeper simpler. However, it matters how you give wet frames to the bees.

Can I Store Wet Supers?

Don't keep wet honey supers, or comb that has recently been extracted, in storage. Supers can get moldy and unsanitary if they are kept wet. It will develop mold, which attracts insects like ants.
Due to the lingering moisture, some comb, brood, and honey will yet develop mold. This mold is neither dangerous to humans nor bees.

If you are unable to freeze the box and the frames together, insert the honeycomb frames into the boxes, then stack the boxes on bottom boards or a flat, firm surface. Boxes can be stacked most easily on flat surfaces like plywood. Cover screens with cardboard or another equivalent material if using bottom boards with screens. Cover any entrance on the bottom board.

Use duct tape to patch up any holes or damaged areas on boxes. Because duct tape leaves a sticky residue, use sheets of butcher paper or brown paper every five supers with moth crystals and paradichlorobenzene crystals in coffee filter packets under the paper, and let the propolis cling to both sides of the paper to close.

Coffee filters can be used to add paradichlorobenzene crystals to the top box before covering it with the lid. All gaps, screens, entrances, etc. must be sealed.

In order to hold the honey super box together, apply duct tape where the corners are broken. To store comb, use big plastic bins if they are available. You can let the comb air out for a few days before using it in the early spring.

Your garage or shed may harbor an infestation if an unprotected or unopened comb is present.

How To Clean Wet Honey Supers

After extracting, allow the bees to clean the wet empty supers.
The bees are excellent at drying the supers, whether you want to give them back to the bees or keep them away from the hives. A stack of supers can be put on a hive and placed over an inner cover with a hole. In most cases, the supers will be dry the next day. To prevent robbing, it is best to put them on the hives late in the day.

Freshly extracted combs frequently present a problem. There are two lines of reasoning. The first method involves storing honey supers wet, and the second involves returning the wet supers to the bees for cleaning before storage.

Many of us prefer the second approach since any leftover resources in the combs might be useful to the bees, and the boxes are free of sticky honey. Robbing may result if wet combs are left open for bees to take any resources. Beekeepers employ a variety of techniques. Putting a honey super back on an active hive is the first step. Placing wet supers outdoors for forager bees to clean up is the second.

Return Supers to the Beehive

Strong hives will clean up wet honey supers very quickly. Putting the supers back on top of the hive for the bees to have direct access removes the need for bees to travel.

Opening the colony, placing the wet super on top of the hive, and eventually removing the cleaned-up super all take labor and time. The beekeeper must shake the bees out of the empty combs after their removal before storing them. The benefit of this strategy is that strong hive populations may deter scavengers like the wax moth and small hive beetles from destroying the comb.

Wet honey supers should be temporarily placed back on the hives beneath the outer cover for the bees to clean after extraction. It is advised against leaving wet, unprotected supers out in the open, as this encourages robbery.

Place the Supers Outdoors

Placing the wet honey supers in an open field far from the apiary will let the foraging bees find and clean the combs. Although this process takes a little longer, once supers are discovered, they may be suitable for long-term storage in a few hours or days. Since no hives need to be opened, very few bees will be left after the procedure is over, and all the boxes are in one location.

The fact that these boxes will be located far from the apiary reduces the likelihood of robbing. Beekeepers must be vigilant since the supers used in this approach are vulnerable to wax moth and small hive beetle infestations if left out too long.

The practice of leaving wet supers outside for bees to clean up after honey extraction may benefit the bees who clean them up, but it could interfere with nearby or weaker colonies and make them defensive. They might even be murdered or robbed. A lot of bee activity can also scare nearby neighbors.

How Long Does It Take Bees To Clean Wet Supers?

Placing wet supers inside your hives will allow the bees to clean them out in the comfort of their own hive for about a day. The wet supers should simply be placed on top of the hive, and inner and outer covers should be added as usual. If you are not experiencing a significant nectar flow, make sure to remove these cleaned-out supers after a few days.

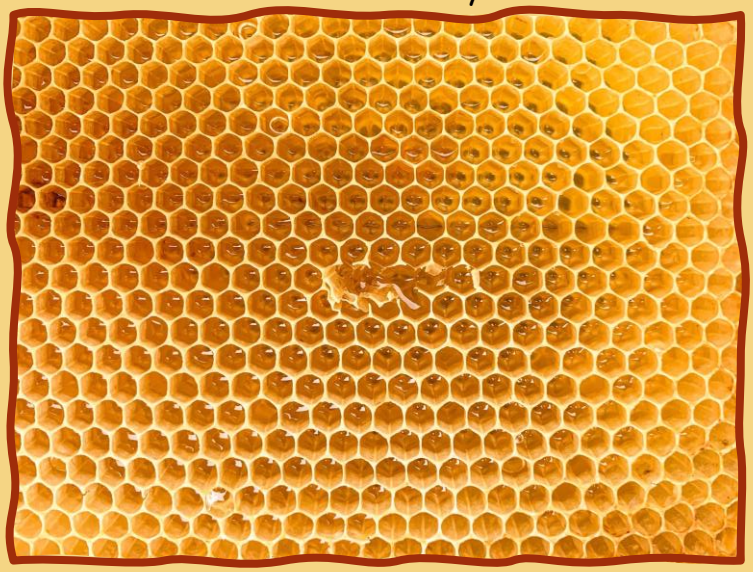
After the honey has been successfully extracted, wet supers should be returned to the hives for cleaning out. It is preferable to wait until late at night to do this and then remove them a few days later for winter storage. It cannot be overstated how curious bees can be during this period, and how much easier it is to prevent robbing than to stop it.

If bee escapes are employed before harvesting and honey supers are basically left undefended by bees, beetles can cause unforeseen problems. Beetles can infest the honey house and soon spoil a sizable amount of a honey harvest if honey is removed from the hive but not extracted right away.

Wet honey capping's from freshly extracted honey are likewise very alluring and susceptible to beetle infestation. Bees will reject honey that has been contaminated by small hive beetles, and such honey is completely inappropriate for human consumption. It should also never be bottled or mixed with other honey when being packed.

What Can You Do With Wet Honey Supers?

For cleaning, bring them back to the hives and set them above the cover board with ventilation holes open. Cleaning boxes at the same apiary from which they were collected is a good idea, as it prevents the potential spread of diseases. Boxes should be put back in the exact hive from where they were taken if brood illness is a recent or ongoing issue.



The "cleaner" boxes should only be placed on the hives at nightfall, preferably on a chilly evening. The smell of exposed honey can send bees into a robbing frenzy if you're not careful, while feeding sugar syrup causes very few issues. Two days is more than enough time, and if the "cleaner" boxes are taken out first thing in the morning before the bees have even begun to fly, they will typically be totally free of bees.

Some beekeepers recommend wet comb storage to prevent wax moth damage, but to keep bees and wasps away, the boxes would need to be very tightly sealed. When the combs are pulled out of storage the next spring, they may appear rather bad, but the bees will rapidly clean them, so they may be used again. The End

What to Do with the Old, Dark Comb

If the comb in your frames is getting to be a dark brown, it's best to remove that comb and not put it back in the beehive. There are two reason why I recommend doing this. The main one being that I put treatments into my hives once a year. Beeswax is very porous, and the wax absorbs these chemicals. I don't believe the buildup of these chemicals is a good thing and prefer to cycle out this wax.

The other reason only pertains to the comb that is in the brood boxes. The brood cells are lined with propolis and get a lot of traffic from bees walking over them to feed the brood (baby bees) all day. When the comb gets dark, I mean *really* dark, these cells can get smaller from the buildup of propolis. Although I see some hives use this comb anyway, I also see hives begin to abandon this comb, if they have room to build comb somewhere else. I prefer to take this comb out and give the bees room to build new honeycomb.

Removing old, dark comb is by no means a requirement. It's one of those things I do because I have a hunch it's the right thing to do and so I do it. Some beekeepers never remove the old comb, and some beekeepers use this comb as bait in swarm traps because they say it lures bees!

Just to clarify, when I talk about old, dark comb, I'm not referring to comb that's a darker brown. I'm referring to the comb that is almost black. It's covered with so much propolis, if you were to fold it, it would just snap, its so stiff and hard.

If you don't know what to do with this dark comb, I recommend making a solar wax melter. It separates the propolis casings from the wax, leaving you with a nice light, yellow wax and a pile of propolis and dirt you can throw away. If you melt the honeycomb in a big pot, I've found this to be a huge waste of time. I end up with very little wax which is darker form the propolis and a lot of wasted time. Here's **how to make a solar wax melter** out of a cooler. It's super easy to make and requires no tools.

MENTORING

We encourage everyone to have a mentor, especially if you are new to beekeeping. If you need a mentor, please let Jr. Snelson or David Sams know at the next meeting, and they will try to find one. Please consider being a mentor for our club! See the secretary to be put on the list

LIBRARY

CVBA encourages each person to further their education by reading books, checking out various websites, and watching the videos that are available on bees and beekeeping.
Check out the selection of books and DVDs we have available.

If you have a book or video checked out, please return it at the next meeting.
Books can be returned to the Club Librarian, President, or Secretary.

If you have an idea for a book or DVD you think would be good for our library let us know.

REMINDERS

Tennessee law requires all colonies to be registered with the state. Use the links below or the QR code to register your apiaries.

Online Apiary Registration Form: Apiary Registration.

Online request form for hive inspection: Apiary Inspection Request

BEEKEEPING HISTORY

The Design of the Honey Dipper: from Primitive to Practical

History

Researched by: Sherri Hudson

The dipper was designed to look like a honeycomb. While this is true, the first honey dippers were pinecones on a stick.

Today's dipper is created in its shape to achieve the same effect the pinecones had. The shape and divots add some surface area so more honey can be stored on the dipper. As long as you keep it spinning, it won't fall.

There are primarily two main types of honey dippers: wooden honey dippers and stainless-steel honey dippers. Wooden honey dippers are more affordable and often feature intricate designs, making them attractive additions to your kitchen. The complex design of this tool serves a specific honey dipper purpose, allowing for precise and controlled drizzling of honey without the mess.

On the other hand, stainless steel honey dippers are known for their durability and are dishwasher safe, making cleaning up a breeze.

To ensure your honey dipper stick lasts and remains hygienic, it's important to store it properly. If you have a wooden dipper, keep it in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight or sources of heat, as this can prevent the wood from cracking or warping over time.

Cleaning your honey dipper is relatively simple. After each use, rinse it with warm water to remove any residual honey. If you're using a wooden dipper, avoid using harsh detergents or soaking it for extended periods, as this can damage the wood.

For stainless steel dippers, you can wash them in the dishwasher or by hand with mild soap. Make sure to dry your dipper thoroughly before storing it to prevent moisture-related issues.

There you have it, the art of how to use a honey dipper. If you want a perfect drizzle of honey, rather than a glob, consider getting yourself a honey dipper stick.

A Honey Dipper for Everyone

Dippers are also called honey wands, honey sticks, honey spoons, and honey drizzlers. Honey dippers are, indeed, a favorite project of woodworkers who don't know what else to do with their lathes.

You can find websites and YouTubes with precise instructions for dipper manufacture. Popular species of wood for dipper workers include olive, maple, walnut, beech, and bamboo.

But wooden dippers are just the tip of the iceberg. You can also find dippers made of stainless steel, silver-plated brass, plastic, silicone, ceramic, and glass. Even so, wooden dippers are considered superior because they won't chip your teacup. Good to know. You don't want to be a dipper chipper.

Others claim that wood absorbs the flavor of honey, while metals or plastic impart a flavor to honey. In addition, wood has antibacterial properties that will protect the honey even after multiple dips. Apparently, wood is king in the dipper department.

Controlling the goo

Experienced dippers get high on controlled drizzling. You hold them vertically to avoid drips and horizontally to encourage drips. The angle you choose—somewhere between vertical and horizontal—displays your artistry. The controlled descent of your honey onto the substrate reveals a lot about your personality. Some say it's all in the wrist.

The shape of the dipping part is variable, and the shape together with the size determines how much honey is delivered and how fast. Popular shapes are cylinders, spheres, skeps, tear drops, pears, and points. Each shape presents its own control variables, so different shapes require different skills. The problem is so complex that those who wish to apportion an exact measurement into their tea—say a teaspoon—are better off leaving dippers to the pros.

Dipping Protocol: How to do it Properly

Apparently, there is much dissension among dippers about protocol. For example, when having tea, do you dribble and simply replace the dipper in the bowl? Or do your swirl the dipper in the tea before replacing it in the bowl? Or do you drizzle, lick, and wash? I suppose there's even a fourth choice. There is even a survey on dipping protocol. The overwhelming majority swirl the honey-laden dipper into their tea and then stick it back in the jar.

It appears that the honey dipper is a one-trick pony that essentially disappeared after the plastic squeeze bear made its way into modern kitchens. But aficionados of dipping say it's the experience rather than the utility that makes it special. The dipper makes honey an event rather than just a condiment. A dipper is romantic, an artifact of times gone by, a conversation piece, and an art form.

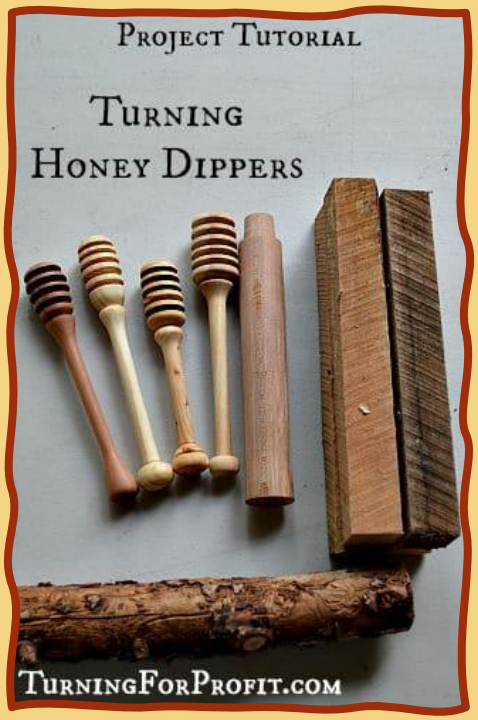
STUDIO PROJECT

Researched by:
Sherri Hudson

A Wood Turning Project: Honey Dipper

By Robin

The Honey Dipper is used to control the flow of liquid honey. The slotted spaces allow you to pick up lots of honey, and by twirling the dipper you can control how much is in your tea or on your toast. Different shapes on the dipping end affects how much honey is picked up. They are a sweet turning project.



Materials & Tools

Just under an inch in diameter, you can use small branches or trim the wood 1" square on your table saw. Make sure you use appropriate safety devices to keep your fingers safe. This is a great way to use local wood, such as cuttings from your neighbor, or local species. I turned honey dippers out of Jack Pine, Larch, and Birch, all found on my property. I would stay away from oily wood as that might taint the honey. Don't use any wood that is toxic. The next picture shows finished dippers, a larch branch, and three dogwood turning blanks, one turned round and ready to go.

Tools needed:

- Roughing gouge – to turn the blank round
- Parting tool – to cut grooves in the dipper
- Skew Chisel or Spindle Gouge – to shape the dipper and handle
- Sandpaper – various grits (I used 150, 220, 320, 400, 600, and 800)
- Cotton cloth or paper towel – to wipe the dipper off between grits
- Food Grade finish

Honey Dipper – Inventory

As an item in your inventory Honey Dippers are a good choice. You don't need a kit to make the product. The design is free hand / creative, that is, there is no standard for the shape of a honey dipper. The handle is completely up to you to design. You can make it as simple or complex as you like. However, this is a utensil, so you do want it to be easy to clean.

You can turn the honey dipper completely between centers with just a bit of cleanup of each end when you are finished. I used a multiple jaw chuck to hold the blank which means I can completely finish the handle end of the dipper. This product is suitable for production runs where you round the blank and put a tenon on it first then move to the multiple jaw chuck for the shaping. Keep your tools sharp and you can turn out two or three in an hour with a little practice. Increase your prices if you are using exotic wood that you had to purchase. Local or found wood are excellent choices for dippers. When pricing make sure the price compensates you for your turning time.

Sometimes a flaw in the wood turns up at the finishing stage. I had cracks and insect damage show up on my larch. Complete the honey dipper anyway. You can use it yourself, as a demo product, or it can go in a discount bin. Unless it is dangerous to use or might break too easily then throw it away. Sometimes the flaw adds to the character of the product. So, think carefully about throwing your not-quite-perfect turnings away.

Turning a Honey Dipper

I started with the prepared dogwood blank being turned round and a tenon to fit into the chuck. The finished dipper shows you where the main features are.

Use a pencil to mark out the rough locations of the dipper and the tapered portions of the handle. I also mark the portions on the end so that it would be easier parting the dipper off of the lathe.

First, I trimmed the ends with the parting tool.

Next, I shaped the dipper end of the honey dipper. You can cut the grooves first and shape second if you want to.

Cut the grooves into the dipper. I like to look down on the dipper as I'm doing this so that I can line up the depth of each groove and keep it all the same. If you find that your parting tool is burning the wood, then the tip of your tool is the same width (or less) than the body. Your parting tool should have a tip that is slightly larger than the blade of the tool, to reduce friction on the wood.

Shape the handle to your taste. Define the dipper end and create an attractive top for the handle.

Finishing Your Honey Dipper

Sand and finish the body of the honey dipper. I use progressive sandpaper starting at 150 to 220 grit depending on how smooth I was able to shape the spindle. Between each grit change I wipe down the turning with either a cotton cloth or a paper towel. This removes any grit that might have fallen off of your sandpaper and prevents a higher grit accidentally scratching your work.

To finish the handle end, work your way down so that there is just a little nub left on the dipper. Then move the tail stock out of the way and support the dipper with your left hand and finish the end with a skew chisel or spindle gouge. Sand and finish that end of the dipper.

Now part the dipper off of the lathe, again using your free hand to support the honey dipper. If you are not sure on doing, this then take the dipper off the lathe and use a saw to trim the end, sandpaper it smooth, and finish to match the rest of the dipper.

One honey dipper turned and finished, ready to spread the honey.

BEE INSIGHTS

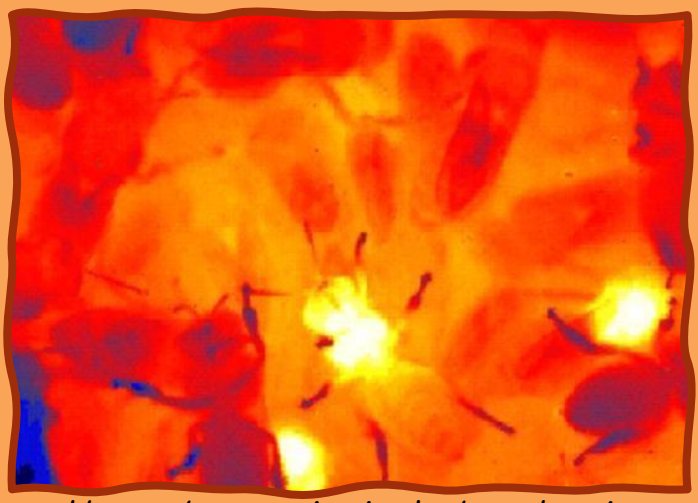
Researched by:
Sherri Hudson

How Honey Bees Keep Their Hives Warm Given That They Are Cold Blooded

June 30, 2012, Daven Hiskey

Up until only a few years ago, it was thought by many scientists that Honey bee hives were kept warm by pupae in the brood and that the bees would often congregate there to warm themselves up from the pupae. Recently, this was found not to be the case when a new Honey bee job was discovered, that of "heater bees." Bees of almost all ages can perform this function by either vibrating their abdomens or they can also decouple their wings from their muscles, allowing them to vigorously use these muscles without actually moving their wings. This can heat their bodies up to about 111° Fahrenheit (44° C), which is about 16° F (9° C) hotter than their normal body temperature.

Another new discovery that went with this was why queen bees leave certain cells in the brood empty. It was previously thought this was an undesirable quality of a queen, so queens that left less empty cells were sought out. In fact, these empty cells are essential to a healthy hive. Before the discovery of heater bees using infrared technology, it was thought the bees that crawled in these empty cells were cleaning them out. What's actually happening is that the heater bees will crawl inside these cells to keep the surrounding cells at the proper temperature, able to warm a maximum of about 70 or so cells per heater bee.



Heater bees active in the brood region of the nest.

Heater bees active in the brood region of the nest.

The heater bees can also directly regulate temperature in individual cells by standing over and pressing their thorax against a cell, something which scientists used to think was just the bees resting. They are working their wing muscles extremely hard to heat up the cell with their heightened body temperature. Why they do this has to do with job distribution.

Normally, Honey bee jobs are primarily "assigned" based on their age. However, if the hive needs more bees that are naturally inclined towards house keeping jobs or foraging, the heater bees can adjust the temperature of certain cells to accommodate this.

Raising the temperature of a cell to 95° F (35° C) rather than the normal cell temperature of about 93° F (34° C) will produce bees that are more inclined to prefer foraging jobs, over housekeeping ones

and vice-versa; so, they'll be more reluctant or more eager to change jobs than other bees their age, depending on their former cell temperature. This helps make sure that the needs of the colony can always be met given the current state of the hive and environment.

Besides performing the task of heating the brood cells, heater bees also help regulate the overall temperature of the hive. This is essential as Honey bees are cold blooded and once their body temperature drops below about 95° F (35° C), they lose the ability to fly, which is why once the outside temperature drops below around 50° F (10° C), you'll no longer see Honey bees flying around as they're no longer capable of keeping their body temperature high enough for flight. If the temperature drops low enough, they lose the ability to move at all.

During winter, the bees all clump together towards the middle of the hive, surrounding the queen. At this time, they allow the temperature of the hive to drop to around 81° F (27° C) on the inside of the cluster to conserve energy. Bees on the outer parts of the cluster, which will usually be around 48° F (9° C), then occasionally rotate with the bees on the more crowded inner parts, so that all the bees can keep warm enough to survive. Once the queen starts laying again, the temperature of the inner part of the hive will be raised back up to about 93° F (34° C).

In order to support the heater bees at their job, other bees are given the job of occasionally bringing food to them as the heater bee's energy starts to run low from their constant, vigorous use of their wing muscles or "vibrating" to generate heat.

heat balling

Bonus Facts:

- It's estimated that about 2/3 of the honey used by a given colony is used to generate heat for the hive.
- Certain species of Honey bee will actually use this heating effect as a weapon against invading insects. For instance, when attacking wasps, they've been observed to surround the wasp in a ball and begin beating their wing muscles and vigorously vibrating. The combination of lack of oxygen for the wasp inside the ball and the drastically raised internal temperature will eventually kill the wasp.
- Honey bees will also use this "heat balling" technique to kill the queen when necessary, such as when the queen is no longer capable of performing her duties and a new queen is installed. This is often called "Cuddle death".

HONEYBEE LUNCH

Researched by:
Sherri Hudson

Honeywort

Deep shades of blue like this are not easy to come by in the plant world.

By Sharon Greenthal

- Lifecycle: Annual
- Hardiness: Hardy Annual
- Size: 2' h x 1-2' w
- Sun: Full sun to partial shade
- Soil: Regular, moist, well-drained
- Season: Summer to fall
- Seed to Bloom: 12-14 weeks
- Color: Purple flowers and bracts are showiest in cool weather

It's hard to find true blues in the plant world, and when you do, it seems like the flowers don't last long. Honeywort's bracts hold their blue or purple color for weeks. The foliage of **honeywort** is also unique. Most plants in this family have exceptionally hairy foliage, whereas honeyworts may only have stray hair here and there. The leaves are thick and waxy in an attractive gray-green color. Honeywort is hardy in Zones 7-10.

Because honeywort is mainly seed-grown, there's quite a bit of variability in flower color. Most honeywort blossoms are purple to blue, but you may come across creams and even yellows.

Where to Plant Honeywort

Full sun is best to grow the most vibrant honeyworts, but plants can tolerate light shade. They prefer rich, well-drained soil but aren't fussy. Honeywort looks good in borders where the gray-green foliage provides a pretty backdrop for vibrantly-colored flowering groundcover.

How and When to Plant Honeywort

Honeywort is usually available at retail as seeds rather than potted plants. They can be started indoors in the spring, several weeks before the last average frost date in your region. Space each seedling 12 to 18 inches apart in the garden once the threat of frost has passed.

If you already have honeywort, they will produce large black seeds that fall to the ground, germinate in autumn, and create a nice stand of plants. next spring in cooler climates where these plants will die from freezing temperatures.

Honeywort Care Tips

Light

Full sun for five or six hours a day will help to give honeyworts the most intense blue-colored bracts possible. However, too much shade can cause honeywort to become quite leggy,

Soil and Water

Honeywort tolerates various soil conditions, making it an easy-to-grow plant. Ideally, it prefers soil rich in humus and organic matter that retains a decent amount of moisture while also being well-drained to prevent potential rot problems. Once established, honeywort can handle the occasional drought, but supplemental watering is beneficial.

Temperature and Humidity

The optimal temperature for honeywort is between 65°F and 75°F. It prefers similarly moderate humidity. While it will do fine in temperatures above and below, it won't survive frost and freeze.

Fertilizer

Fertilize container-grown honeywort once a month. In the garden, fertilizer isn't necessary, but an organic compost is beneficial. Amend the soil when planting.

Pruning

Honeywort doesn't need pruning, unless leaves are yellowing.

Potting and Repotting Honeywort

Honeywort grows well in pots. Choose one with adequate drainage to prevent root rot.
When growing honeywort in containers, use a general-purpose potting mix; the plant will need regular watering when grown in a pot, especially during warm summer weather. During the growing season, apply a general-purpose liquid plant food according to product label instructions.

Pests and Problems

Other than common garden pests, honeywort doesn't have any big problems.

How to Propagate Honeywort

To propagate honeywort, plant seeds collected from plants existing plants in small pots 6 to 8 weeks before the frost-free date for your area. Once the threat of frost has passed, plant the young seedlings outdoors. You can also sow honeywort seeds directly in the ground with good success.

Types of Honeywort

'Kiwi Blue' Honeywort

Easier to find as a seed than a potted plant, Kiwi Blue (Cerinthe major subsp. purpurascens "Kiwi Blue") has bluer bracts than other varieties.

'Purple Belle' Honeywort

One of the most popular varieties, C. major subsp. purpurascens 'Purple Belle' grows magenta bell-shaped bracts over blue-gray leaves. It self-seeds readily.

'Pride of Gibralter' Honeywort

Nodding clusters of blue bracts on graceful gray-green stems make unique additions to cut flower bouquets. Pride of Gibralter (C. major 'Pride of Gibralter) is a hardy annual that bees love.

POLLINATORS GARDEN

POLLINATORS are a diverse group of species that includes birds, bees, butterflies, bats and beetles. They are critically important to life and their numbers are in steady decline as a result of habitat loss, pests, pathogens, pesticides and other stressors.

Fall pollinator plants

When I plan a new pollinator garden or change an existing garden, I start choosing plants for the easiest season first — fall. Goldenrods is a star and workhorse of the fall pollinator garden.

In late summer and fall, the plants are covered in beautiful blooms, as well as a wide variety of pollinators attracted by abundant nectar and high-protein pollen. In winter, Juncos and remaining Goldfinches eat the seeds.

Goldenrods

It's a shame that goldenrods aren't used more in gardens here, like they are in Europe.
One big reason it's ignored is the myth that it cause allergies; its pollen is large and sticky to facilitate insect pollination, so it doesn't blow around. Instead, ragweed is the culprit, which has fine, light pollen because the plant is wind-pollinated.
Another reason goldenrods are rarely used in gardens is because common Canada Goldenrod is an aggressive spreader. There are actually many other kinds of goldenrod that are well-suited for gardens.

Pollinators on Zigzag Goldenrod

For sun, there are many possibilities. I really like the umbellifer-clusters of flowers on Ohio Goldenrod and Stiff Goldenrod. 'Fireworks' Rough Goldenrod is my latest-bloomer and attracts lots of bees and migrating Monarchs well into September and October.

To my surprise, there are also some lovely goldenrods for shadier spots. Zigzag goldenrod is my absolute favorite. It's wand-like stems are covered in golden stars and insects. This plant grows in dry, part-shade to shade, and is even fragrant. What's not to love? Bluestem Goldenrod has an arching habit and is another plant I grow in part-shade. While Zigzag Goldenrod spreads slowly becoming a ground-cover, Bluestem Goldenrod remains in a clump.

More recently, I tried growing Silverod from seed. Believe it or not, it has creamy-white flowers, instead of bright yellow. It blooms earlier than my other goldenrods and has an upright shape. Beaux Arbres Native Plants sells seeds and plants.

Goldenrod is a native North American perennial wildflower that is tall and slim with fluffy golden flower spikes in various shades of yellow. Once regarded as an invasive weed, goldenrod is increasingly valued by gardeners thanks to cultivars that offer better performance and more attractive flowers. Goldenrod grows best in any sunny location, survives well in average or even poor soil, and thrives in temperatures between 65- and 80-degrees Fahrenheit.

Goldenrod Care

Here are the main care requirements for growing goldenrod.

- Plant goldenrod in the spring or fall, choosing a sunny location with average soil.
- Stake the taller varieties so the plants don't flop and bend.
- Water young goldenrod plants weekly to keep soil moist until established, then only supplement in drought.
- Do not overfertilize; goldenrod does not need fertilizer at all.

POLLINATORS GARDEN cont.

Light

Goldenrod craves full sun for optimal flowering. The plant will tolerate a bit of shade, though a shady location can reduce its blooms.

Plant Profile: Zigzag goldenrod

Soil

Goldenrod is not overly picky about soil, but it must be well-drained with a pH in the acidic-to-neutral range. This plant can tolerate sandy, rocky, and clay soils. Very rich soil can cause the plant to become leggy and potentially flop over.

Water

Water new goldenrod plants weekly to maintain damp, but not soggy soil. Mature goldenrod plants are drought tolerant and rarely need supplemental watering except when rainfall is scarce.

Temperature and Humidity

The hardiness range varies a bit depending on the species, but most goldenrods thrive in USDA cold hardiness zones 2 to 8, taking heat and cold weather in stride. Goldenrod isn't fussy about humidity, either.

Fertilizer

Fertilizing goldenrod is typically not necessary because the plants do well in lean soil conditions. However, if the soil quality is poor or you wish to give your plants a boost to increase their height, add a layer of compost in the spring.

Too much fertilization often leads to floppy green growth and reduces flower production.

Types of Goldenrod

The many goldenrod species vary somewhat in size and appearance. Cultivars are known to be less aggressive spreaders than the species forms. Some popular species—all native to North America—include:

Solidago caesia (blue-stemmed goldenrod) has arching purplish stems. It is not an aggressive spreader and produces good cut flowers.

Solidago odora (sweet goldenrod) is a 2- to 4-foot plant with anise-scented leaves and yellow flowerheads. It does not spread aggressively and has a good tolerance for poor, dry soils.

Solidago rugosa 'Fireworks'

Solidago speciosa '*Showy*'

Solidago rugosa, also known as rough goldenrod or Fireworks is a 3- to 5-foot plant with a fondness for moist conditions. A popular cultivar is 'Fireworks', with its arching golden-yellow flowerheads that resemble an exploding skyrocket.

Solidago speciosa, also known as showy goldenrod, grows 1 to 3 feet tall, with dense clusters of tiny yellow flowers.

Solidago sphecelata, also known as autumn goldenrod, is a 12- to 24-inch species with arching stems holding plumes of yellow flowers. Two notable cultivars are 'Golden Fleece', a short 15- to 18-inch plant with arching cylindrical flowers, and 'Wichita Mountains', a 30-inch plant with rich gold flowers.

Solidago bicolor (white goldenrod) is noteworthy simply because it does not display the typical yellow goldenrod blooms. Instead, it features white blooms.

POLLINATORS GARDEN cont.

Some hybrid cultivars to consider include:

Solidago canadensis hybrid *'Baby Gold'*

'Baby Gold' (Solidago canadensis hybrid) is a 2- to 3-foot plant that produces its bright yellow flowers a little earlier from mid- to late summer.

'Little Lemon' (Solidago hybrida 'Dansolitlem') is an excellent compact variety (8 to 12 inches), with pale lemon flowers.

'Peter Pan' (Solidago virgaurea) has very large spreading flower clusters on 2-foot plants.

'Solar Cascade' (Solidago shortii,) is a 2- to 3-foot plant that produces plentiful golden flower heads.

Solidago hybrida Danslitlem 'Little Lemon'

Pruning

Pruning stem tips early in the season can result in goldenrod plants becoming fuller and bushier and lead to more flowers later in the season. Deadheading spent flower heads can prolong the bloom season well into fall. Removing the flower heads before they go to seed can prevent rampant self-seeding. At the end of the season or in late winter, cut the plant stalks back to a few inches above ground level.

Propagating Goldenrod

Use this process to propagate goldenrod by division in the spring:

- When new growth has just started, lift the entire plant out of the ground with a shovel. If it is too big to move in a single piece, do so in sections. Every section should have at least a couple of growth tips.
- Shake off any excess soil, which helps to separate the rhizomes into smaller sections.
- Replant each section at the same depth as the original plant and water it well. Keep watering the division until you see new growth.

You can also propagate goldenrod from cuttings:

- In the early summer, use clean garden shears to cut 4-inch shoots from the base of the plant and dip the cut ends in rooting hormone.
- Plant the cuttings about 1 inch deep in a 4- to 6-inch pot filled with potting mix and slowly water until the soil is evenly moist and water starts to drip out of the drainage holes.
- Place the pot in a protected location out of direct sunlight and drying winds.
- Keep the soil moist at all times.
- When you see new growth, transplant the goldenrod into the garden.

How to Grow Goldenrod From Seed

Growing goldenrod from seed is easy; the only requirement for most Solidago species is a 60-day cold stratification period. This can be naturally achieved by sowing the seeds outdoors in a weed-free location in the late fall or early spring, so the seeds are naturally exposed to prolonged cold, moist conditions.

Alternatively, you can artificially stratify the seeds by placing them in a sealed plastic b with a damp paper towel, sand, or vermiculite. Store the bag in the refrigerator for 60 d degrees (or lower) Fahrenheit. After the stratification period, sow the seeds outdoors in e spring.

Sow the seeds shallow, no deeper than the width of the seed, and keep them evenly moist until seedlings emerge.

Potting and Repotting Goldenrod

Because goldenrod is a vigorous spreader, gardeners sometimes grow it in pots where it can be contained better than in garden beds. Use a container at least 12 inches in diameter with large drainage holes. Unglazed clay is ideal because it lets excess moisture evaporate.

Fill the pot with a quality potting mix, place the plant in the pot, and backfill with the potting mix. Water the plant slowly and thoroughly until the soil is evenly moist. Like all container plants, even established goldenrod needs to be watered regularly, unlike in a garden setting.

When roots grow out of the drainage holes, or the plant becomes root-bound, transplant it to a larger pot, or divide it and replant a section of it in a pot of the same size with fresh potting soil.

Overwintering

Goldenrod is a hardy plant up to USDA cold hardiness zone 2 and does not need protection unless grown in containers, in which case it is recommended to winterize the containers to insulate the roots against freezing temperatures.

In the garden, the stems can be cut down to a few inches above ground level after frost kills the foliage. Removing the stems, including seed heads, will reduce self-seeding in the garden.

Common Pests & Plant Diseases

Goldenrod can be attacked by beetles, aphids, and gall-forming insects, though the results are rarely fatal. The flower can also be affected by rust fungus, powdery mildew, and leaf spot. These fungal diseases are usually tolerated, though spraying with fungicide is an option. Most species prefer drier soils, and root rot is a possibility in dense, damp soils.

How to Get Goldenrod to Bloom

Bloom Months

Goldenrods are late-season bloomers producing their flowers from mid or late summer into fall, though the precise bloom period varies somewhat depending on species and cultivar.

What Does Goldenrod Look and Smell Like?

Goldenrod is a tall, slightly arching plant with a wider base than the tip. The long curvy stem and tip is filled with dense cylindrical clusters of yellow flower heads. The flowers have an anise-like scent, which is a mix of licorice and a sweet and spicy fragrance.

How to Encourage More Blooms

Other than giving the plant sun, there is not much else to do with goldenrod that will encourage more blooms. When these plants fail to bloom, it's usually because they don't receive enough sun. And like many native plants, giving excessive fertilizer to goldenrod can have a counterproductive effect by stimulating green growth but reducing flower production.

POLLINATORS GARDEN cont.

Deadheading Goldenrod

Deadheading spent flower clusters can extend the bloom period right up to killing frost.

Common Problems With Goldenrod

Goldenrod is the golden child of the garden and does not pose many problems. There are only a couple of things to watch for with this wildflower.

Aggressive Spreading

The most frequent issue arising with goldenrod is how to prevent it from spreading where you don't want it. Mature plants can spread via reseeding and underground rhizomes, potentially outcompeting other plants in the garden. To prevent this, grow goldenrod in containers or a garden bed with barriers to contain the underground spread.

Another way to control the spread is to divide your goldenrod often, at least every two to three years, so it doesn't have the chance to expand. Also, deadhead spent flower heads promptly to stop them from spreading their seeds if you don't want new plants to pop up. Or better yet, cut the flowers to use in floral arrangements.

Leggy Growth

Goldenrod can become leggy and floppy for two reasons: too much fertilizer and overly rich soil. When goldenrod becomes leggy, it tends to flop over.

APIARY in the NEIGHBORHOOD

This feature is for CVBA members to show off your apiaries. Send me your photos and videos of your apiary with a short description and we will publish it here.

NO PARTICIPATION

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Renewal Dues become payable January 1st of each year.
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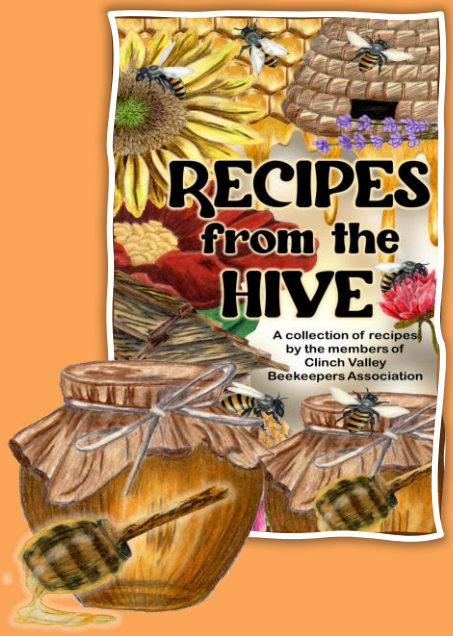
See a CVBA officer to complete a new membership form or click here to download a form.

Checks should be made payable to CVBA. You can mail checks to the address on the last page. Please let us know if any of your information has changed. We want to make sure you can stay connected with the club to help you get the most out of your membership!

RECIPES from the HIVE



POPCORN BALLS

8 cups popped popcorn
1½ sticks butter
½ cup light molasses
pinch of salt
½ cup honey

1. Pop the popcorn.
2. Cook molasses and honey until candy thermometer reads 270° or hard-crack stage.
3. Stir in butter and salt.
4. Slowly add mixture to popcorn.
5. Butter your hands lightly and shape popcorn into balls.
6. Place on waxed paper.
7. To store, wrap in waxed paper.

from former member
Teresa Lamb
page 11

***I make these for Halloween trick or treaters in my neighborhood. I place each ball in a large muffin paper and stick a popsicle stick in them, so they don't get their little hands so sticky. Sherri*

Brown Butter Honey Pumpkin Cornbread Muffins

from member
Sherri Hudson

1¼ cups yellow cornmeal
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
pinch nutmeg
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup pumpkin purée – *You can use canned pumpkin purée, or I grow and make my own.*
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 cup milk – *I like to use a regular unsweetened almond milk or full fat buttermilk whenever*
1/3 cup honey – *You could use maple syrup instead of honey if you prefer.*
2 tablespoons melted butter or coconut oil

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Grease 12 cup muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray or line with paper liners. I always spray the inside of the liners so that it ensures the muffins do not stick.
2. Add the butter to a small skillet or pot. Heat the skillet to medium heat. The butter will start to melt as the skillet heats up. Allow the butter to bubble and "cook" until it begins to change from a bright yellow color to a golden-brown color. You will know the butter has "browned" when you see brown bits beginning to form in the bottom of the skillet or pot. Once brown, remove the butter from the heat and set aside.

3. In a large bowl, stir flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg together.
4. In a separate large bowl, stir together pumpkin, egg, almond milk, honey, and melted brown butter.
5. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients and stir until just combined.
6. Divide batter evenly into muffin tins.
7. Bake for 15-18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean or with just a few crumbs attached.

Serve the muffins warm. A drizzle of honey, butter, and cinnamon is always a delicious touch! Makes 12 muffins.

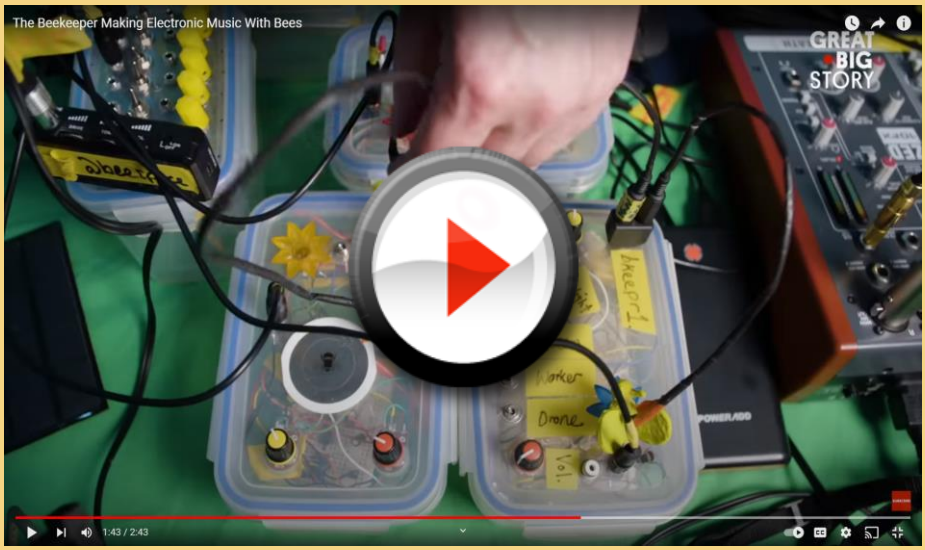
Clinch Valley Beekeepers Association

BUZZ ART GALLERY

The Beekeeper Making Electronic Music With Bees

Great Big Story

Everyone's buzzing about Bioni. He's a British beekeeper and producer making electronic music incorporating the sounds of bees. You can't really bring bees into a recording studio, of course. They'd swarm the mic. So Bioni records the insects buzzing in their hives using homemade equipment. He extracts samples from the recordings and data, and processes the sounds through his Hive Synthesizer, which uses honey as an organic electrical resistor. People at music festivals all around the world can dance to Bioni's beats and learn about colony collapse disorder at the same time. Bees have been dying at an alarming rate, and we need to save these pollinators if agriculture is to survive.



This story is a part of our Frontiers series, where we bring you front and center to the dreamers, pioneers, and innovators leading society at the cutting edge. Let us take you along for a trip to the oft-imagined but rarely accomplished.

BEE QUOTE

"I go to books and to nature as the bee goes to a flower, for a nectar that I can make into my own honey."

John Burroughs

POETS STAGE

When do the bees go?

by Sweet Bee

Why do the bees fly?
Sigh and die
Or be just bees
When are they afraid, or fearless of all
When do they fight, when do they fall
When are they happy or sad?
Never
Bees are always glad
They work and create
Creators of all
Bees are the universe,
In a body so small
Bees are endless,
With their golden stripes of courage
Forever marked on their hair
Forever marked on their hearts
Bees of new, bees of old
All in same, same in all
Eternal in the sky,
Always in time
The wings buzz
As they fly, fly, fly
When do the bees go?

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ANSWER to BEE FUNNY

More honey and shorter working flowers..

KIDS CORNER

The Beekeeper and the White Rabbit

Long ago in Scotland there lived a boy, a beekeeper, who lived in a cottage. Though he lived by himself,

he wasn't at all lonely. His bees kept company with him just fine. In the summer when flowers covered the ground the bees buzzed about happily, and he felt happy, too.
In the fall when flowers were harder for bees to find, he could tell by their buzzing sounds that they felt scared.
Then he would tell them what a good job they had done that summer, what large fine batches of honey they made!
He knew they felt better by their cheerful buzzing.
People in town said the boy could talk to the bees.

Maybe it was true and maybe it wasn't, but the beekeeper felt deep down that he and the bees understood each other.

One evening as the boy was outside checking his beehive, two dogs ran out of the woods barking and coming right at him! In front of the dogs raced a small white rabbit.
Quickly, the boy grabbed the white rabbit and hid it under his jacket.
The two dogs circled around his legs, barking and jumping at him. He picked up a stick and swung it around. Finally, the dogs gave up and went away. When the dogs were gone, the boy set the white rabbit back down on the ground and returned to his beehive.

But instead of hopping off into the woods, the white rabbit followed the boy.
All day long, the rabbit stayed just a few steps behind him. When the boy went back to his cottage at the end of the day, the rabbit followed him into his hut.
"Well," said the beekeeper. "You act like you want to be my pet." He looked around. "I suppose I could find a carrot for you."
He let the white rabbit nibble on the carrot while he scooped some stew into a bowl for his own dinner.

When they had both finished eating, the rabbit jumped onto his lap. He stroked the rabbit's head and ears. "Wow!" said the boy. "I've seen black or pink eyes on a white rabbit, but how did you get those blue eyes?"

The next morning, the boy took the rabbit to the beehive to introduce it to them as his new pet. So, he held out the rabbit for them to get to know.
The bees buzzed around the rabbit, but the rabbit didn't seem to mind and neither did the bees. Then the bees flew back to their hive and went back to making honey.

Sitting in his cottage one afternoon a few weeks later, the boy noticed an old woman walking along the road. Thinking he might sell her a fine honeycomb; he went out to the gate. Before he could speak, she pointed to the rabbit, who was hiding behind a flower.
"You don't see that every day," said she with an evil smile. "A blue-eyed white rabbit."
"Yes," said the boy, turning around to admire his pet.
"What do you want for it?" said the old woman.
"Oh, the rabbit is not for sale," said he.
"Come now, boy," said the old woman. "Everything has a price. Goodness, it's just a rabbit! Look, here's a gold coin. It's not every day you are offered a real gold coin for a common white rabbit, now, is it?"
"My white rabbit is not common," said the boy. "And she is not for sale!"

Suddenly the woman, who then didn't seem so old, jumped over the gate and reached out to grab the rabbit. A bee on a flower nearby gave a loud buzz that alerted the other bees. In a flash, a dark cloud of bees had gathered and rushed to attack the old woman.
"Eek!" she cried, spinning around and running away, a swarm of bees trailing behind her. You'll be sorry you didn't hand over the worthless rabbit when you had the chance!"

Market day was when the beekeeper sold his honey in town along with all the other merchants who were busy selling wares at their tables, too.
At a slow time of the day, the young man shared with the baker next to him what had happened the day before.
"Surely that old woman was a witch," said the baker, arranging his bread and meat pies into neat rows. "Take my word, you'd better be careful."
"No doubt about it," agreed the merchant on the other side of the beekeeper, who was selling sweaters and kilts. "She is a witch. If you don't believe it, yer aff yer heid!"
"Then again," the boy thought to himself, "these two say everyone is a witch."
Just the same, to be sure, that night he locked his windows and doors. From then on, he kept a close eye on his white rabbit at all times.

The summer passed. By the time frost lay on the ground in the morning, few flowers, and very few bees, remained out in the cold air anymore. Most bees were already back in the hives where they began their winter work of keeping the hive warm enough for their queen to lay her eggs.

One chilly October morning, the boy was setting trays of sugar water into the beehives when a wagon of traveling magicians rolled by on its way to the next town. The lad waved to the driver, and a young man in the wagon waved back.
A few hours later, the boy noticed a sack of grain lying in the road.
"Oh no, it must have dropped from the wagon! They'll never know it's missing till they set up camp tonight. By then it'll be too dark to come back looking for it."
The boy lifted the sack onto his cart and took off, following the tracks that the travelers' wagon had left in the road. In an hour or so he finally caught up with them. When they stopped, the boy handed the young driver the sack of grain.
"Do you mean to tell me you followed us all this way to return this sack of grain?" said the young man. "Most folks are more than glad for us to be on our way."
"Why wouldn't I bring it back to you?" he said. "Or I'd have to think about your poor horses missing their dinner tonight."

Just then the rabbit poked its head out from under the beekeeper's jacket.
"And what is that?" said the young man. "A blue-eyed white rabbit?"
"Yes," he said with pride. "It is my pet."
"More than a pet, I'd say," said the young man. "Grandma!" he "Come out. I want to show you something."
An old woman with a bright headscarf, long pleated skirt and puffy white shirt stepped out of the van.
Now what do you think of that?" said the young man, nodding toward the rabbit.
"Oh my!" said the grandmother.
"It's only a rabbit," said the beekeeper.

The old woman shook her head. "I wouldn't say that."
"What else could it be?"
"Tis a lassie!" said the grandmother. "A girl who's been cursed with a spell!"
The beekeeper could not believe it. Then he shared his story. He told them both about the two dogs, the strange old woman and what his friends at the marketplace had said about her.
"Your friends are right," said the grandmother, "That woman was a witch. No doubt the very one who cursed this poor girl. One thing you can count on, she will come back. She's waiting for the perfect time."
"What time is that?"
"Halloween, I suspect," said the grandmother. "The bees will be all back in their hives by then and won't bother her. But most important, that's the one day of the year when the magic of witches is the strongest."
"What can I do to protect my rabbit?" said the beekeeper.
"Tell me, did you say you can talk to the bees?"
"Not exactly talk..."
"Hmmm, you may need their help. When you go home, explain to the bees that the witch may return. Before the sun sets on Halloween, tie a good strong rope around the rabbit's neck and shoulders and keep her on your lap till past midnight."
"That sounds easy enough," said the boy.
"Do you think so?" said the grandmother. "When she's under the witch's spell, she may pull and jump with a power that will shock you. You must hold her tight. If the bees can help, all the better."
The old woman took a deep breath and looked at him with her old watery eyes. "That's all I can say. Other than that, what will be, will be."
When the lad returned to his cottage, he carried the rabbit from hive to hive, repeating what the old woman had told him. He felt a bit silly explaining all of this to his bees. Yet, strangely, they seemed to understand.

Finally, it was Halloween. The beekeeper did as he was told. He tied a strong rope safely around the rabbit's neck and shoulders and set her on his lap. There she sat calmly until it was so dark; he could only see her white fur.
Then suddenly, the rabbit jumped off his lap so strongly that he could barely hold her. She twisted with such might that it was all he could do to keep her from sliding out of his hands.
Just as she started to wriggle free, he heard the buzz of his bees. Closer and closer came the bees, forming a cloud around the rabbit. The rabbit became calm again and no longer tried to escape.

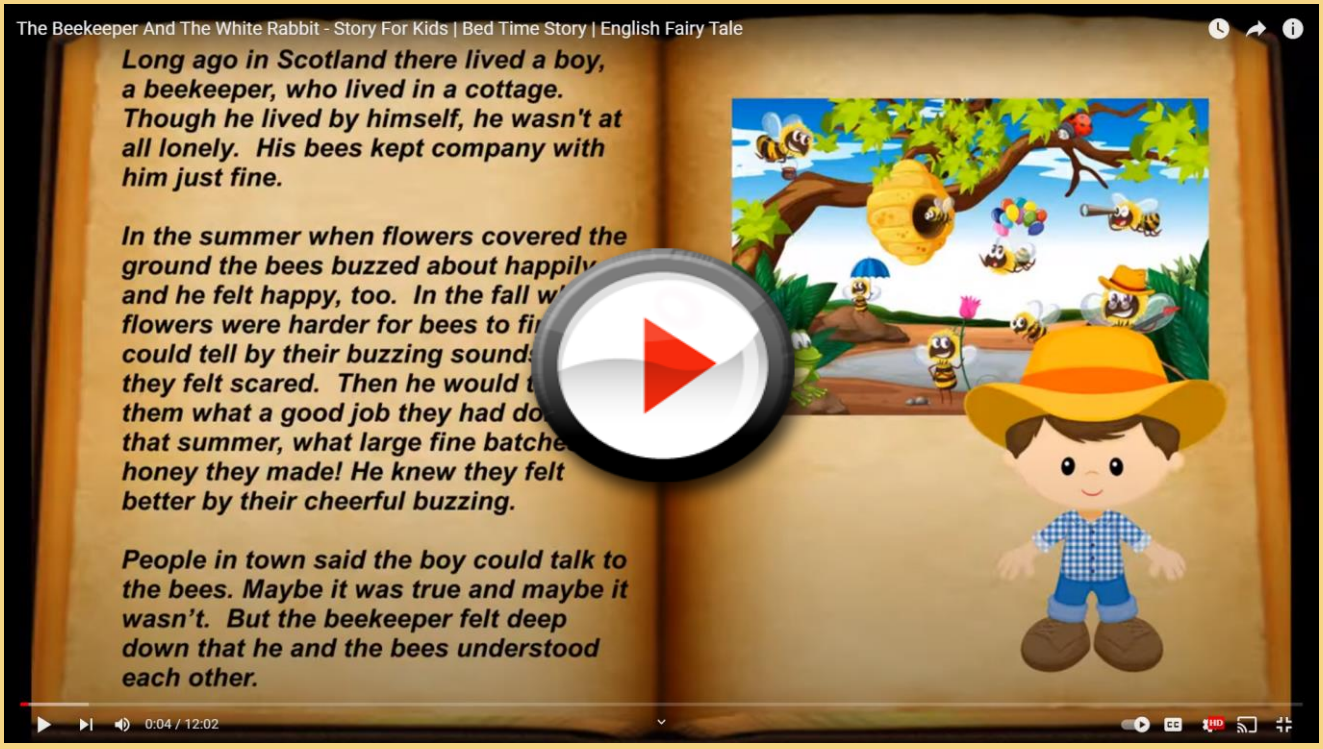
And then, as if the magic curse had been lifted, the rabbit on his lap was no longer a rabbit at all, but a blue-eyed young girl!

Quickly he removed the rope from around her neck. She stepped off his lap and they laughed at the wonder of it, they did not know what to think!

As morning came, the bees flew back to their hives with pride. Over some tea and the bees' honey, the girl told the boy the story of how she became cursed by the evil witch. But now, well, the girl almost thought of it as a blessing, rather than a curse.

For if a boy could show such love and tender care to his bees and a simple white rabbit, then imagine the love and care he would show to her. You will not be surprised to hear that the two of them were soon married and lived happily for many long years.

The End



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Clinch Valley Beekeepers Association

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The club has a full line of bee equipment for sale.
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