



Beekeeping and Honey Bee Fun Facts: Did you know?

June 14, 2018

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If you've ever met a beekeeper, or read about honey bees, you'd uncover a wealth of information that might make for some bizarre, albeit memorable trivia questions. Check out these interesting facts gathered by beekeepers and professional researchers.

The benefits of honeybees:

- Honeybees are super pollinators, meaning they're very good at helping flowers and plants reproduce. About 1/3 of the U.S. diet comes from insect-pollinated plants. Honeybees are responsible for an impressive 80% of that process. **National Honey Board**
- Americans consumed 410 million pounds of honey in 2010. Of that, nearly 70% was imported. **The Honey Bee Conservancy**
- 44% of beekeeper colonies were lost in the U.S. between 2015-2016 due to varroa mites, pesticides and malnutrition from habitat loss. **Bee Informed**
- Honeybees were imported from Europe almost 400 years ago. **Pollinator Partnership**
- Where can you keep bees? Anywhere enough nectar-bearing flowers grow. View these **pollinator-friendly Plant Guides** to determine which plants are best suited for your region.
- Domestic honeybees pollinate approximately \$10 billion worth of crops in the U.S. each year. **Pollinator Partnership**
- One pound of honey requires nectar from 2 million flowers and 55,000 miles of bee-flight airtime **Honeybee Conservancy**
- In one year, a typical beehive can produce anywhere from 30-100 pounds of honey **Mental Floss**
- The modern beehive was invented by Rev. L.L. Langstroth in 1851. Most use it because the movable frames make it easy to harvest honey.





Drone (male) honeybee. (Public Domain, USGS, Sam Droege)

Ever wonder how a beekeeper gets their bees?

Most acquire them in one of 3 ways:

- Catch a wild swarm in the spring
- Order your bees by mail to be shipped to your post office (called a package colony). Most are provided in 2-lb., 3-lb. or 4-lb. shipments. A 3-lb. package contains approx. 10,000 workers, a queen, and some sugar water to feed the small colony while en route. It can take about 1-2 years to get a honey harvest if you are just starting out from a new package colony.
- Buy an established Nucleus Colony (a.k.a. nuc) from another beekeeper. A nuc is usually made up of Langstroth-fitting frames already populated with around 40,000-80,000 established bees, including a queen. Nucs are more expensive than a packages because they contain working frames. **Basic Beekeeping**



(Credit: Sarah Scott, USGS. Public domain.)

Honeybee Colony Facts

What's a Typical Bee Colony Population Look Like?

- An established hive will usually have between 40,000-80,000 bees
- Queen: Only 1 per colony
- Worker Bees: Make up about 95% of the colony
- Drones: Make up the remaining 5%



Bee Colony Caste System

Bees have 3 social roles within a colony

- **Queen** | The queen's job is to continually lay eggs
Lifespan | Up to 3 years
Queen Fun Fact | A queen can lay between 1,500-2,000 eggs per day
- **Worker Bees** | Are all female, but with undeveloped, or static reproductive systems. Worker bees are either a housekeeper (upkeep the hive) or forager (collect the nectar, pollen, and water necessary to sustain life inside the hive).
Lifespan | Approx. 30 days
Worker Bee Fun Fact | The primary cause of death for a worker bee is burnout (their wings give out after 800 kilometers of flight).
- **Drone** | Male bees that don't work. Their only role is to mate with the queen
Lifespan | Less than 25 days
Drone Fun Fact | After mating with the queen, a drone's abdomen explodes and they die

Interested in starting your own colony? Check out these CASTLECREEK® Beekeeping Tools:



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Beehive**



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**2-Frame Honey
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