

Field Ecology

What's the Buzz?

Pre-Visit activity, grades 3+

Objective

Students will consider the various jobs bees perform to keep their hive functional by creating a newspaper to help manage an imaginary hive.

Materials

- Newspaper (use as a sample/model)
- Library books on bees (pictures helpful)
- Pencils, crayons, markers, and paper
- Glue, rubber cement, or tape
- Large pieces of paper (newsprint or other over-sized sheets)

Background

As many as 80,000 bees can live in a natural beehive. Bees spend their whole lives working toward one goal-trying to make their hive last forever, even after they themselves are dead and gone. Since most live only about six weeks, bees have to get to work the very same day they are born. Different jobs are assigned to three types of bees: the queen, drones, and worker bees.

Divulge following information or let students brainstorm depending on their abilities:

Queen: lays eggs, up to 3,000 a day, one queen per hive

Drones: male bees, do not work in the hive, only job is to mate with the queen, starve to death or get kicked out of hive at end of summer to die in cold weather (new drones allowed to develop next spring)

Worker Bees: all female bees (except the queen) are workers and graduate from job to job as they mature, their jobs are: clean cells of old food and larval remains for reuse, feed larvae, store nectar and pollen, build comb with wax made in their bodies, cap off hive cells with wax for storage of honey and pupae development, groom and feed the queen, fan hive to maintain correct temperature and evaporate honey to proper consistency, guard hive from robber bees from other hives, food gathering (pollen, nectar, stolen honey).

Procedure

Tell students they are managers of a beehive. Right now, the hive is empty and unproductive. Their job is to produce a newspaper to attract and advertise for all the kinds of bees they will need to get their hive working and keep it prosperous. Use enclosed background information and any other beehive resources you have to facilitate discussion and/or research.

Newspaper can include pictures, articles, headlines, classified ads with job descriptions, or anything the children come up with. Use the sample newspaper for examples and ideas. Paste the various articles, advertisements, and pictures on the large sheets of paper to form a newspaper-like display.