



LIFE IN THE HIVE

Life in the hive is busy, many hands make light work!

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KEY FACTS

Number of queen bees:
1

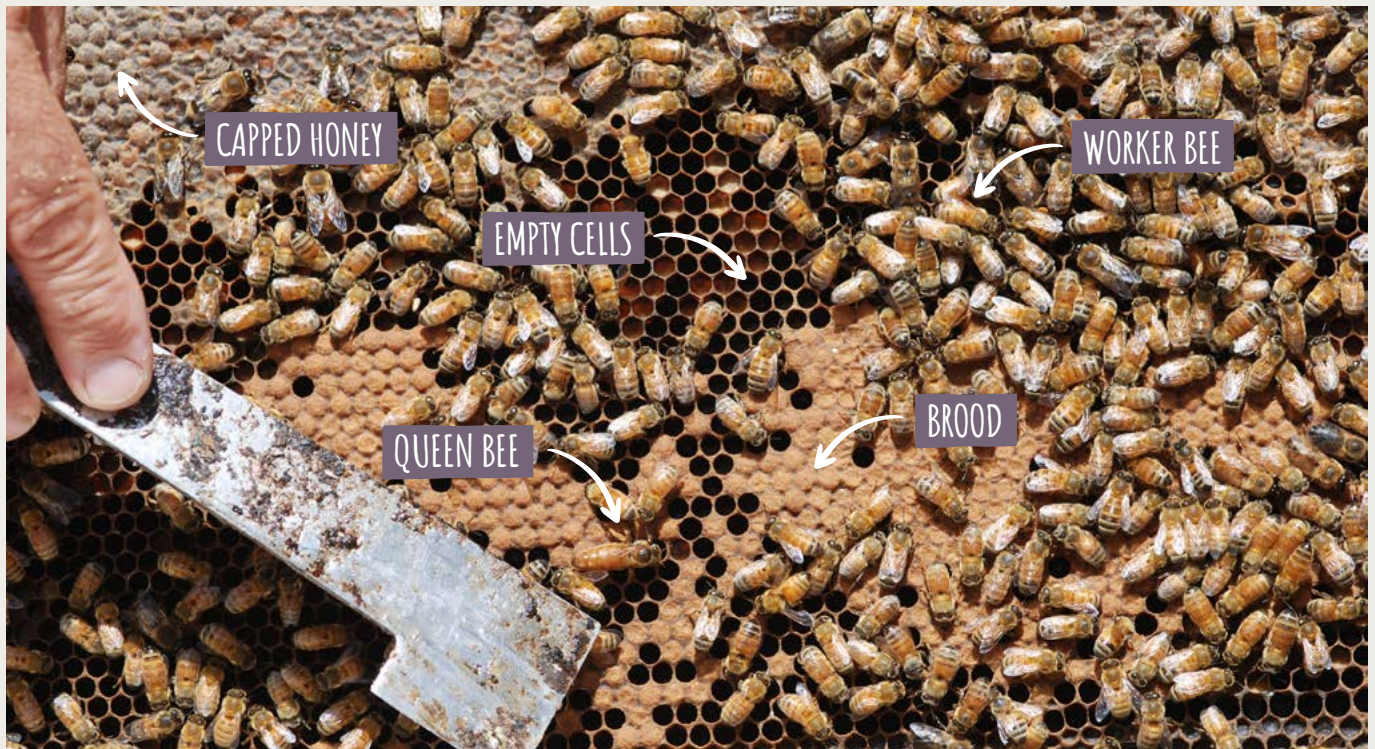
Number of worker bees:
Thousands

Number of drone bees:
Hundereds

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In every European honey bee colony there are three types of bees - a queen, workers, and drones.

There are thousands of workers, hundreds of drones, and just one queen bee. This adds up to between 45,000 and 60,000 bees in a healthy hive! The types are interdependent - meaning they rely on each other for survival.



Bees are attuned to the environment and the activities within their colony vary substantially depending on the seasons.

SPRING

Springtime is the busiest time for bees. With the weather warming up and flowers blooming, it is time for the workers to leave the hive and collect pollen and nectar for food stores. The queen steadily lays more and more eggs, and the drones begin to reappear. As the days become longer and milder, the hive becomes noticeably more active.

SUMMER

This activity continues throughout the warm months. However, if the colony becomes too big, the queen may leave with around half of the population to form a new hive. This is known as 'swarming'. When this occurs a new queen is required.

AUTUMN

As the weather begins to cool, the rate at which the queen lays her eggs slows. The workers begin to evict the drones, and workers spend less and less time outside of the hive collecting pollen and nectar. Propolis is used during this time to reduce the size of the hive entrance and to seal cracks in the hive to keep out the cold.

WINTER

Once temperatures drop below 14 degrees celsius, the bees will very rarely leave the hive. They cluster together closely to keep warm, with the queen towards the centre where it is the warmest. While the bees remain in the hive, they are anything but dormant! They spend their days in an active state; vibrating to keep each other warm, and consuming their food stores.



Centre
For Bee
Education

Centre for Bee Education is a collaboration between When Bee Foundation and Bee School by Beechworth Honey and provides a wealth of learning resources and tools on the important role bees and other pollinators play in the environment and food production systems.

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Inspiring a love of bees
through learning

