



Honey Bees - Biology

Worksheet: The History of Honey

Honey bees (as well as many other insects) are one of science's greatest mysteries because they have remained unchanged for twenty million years, while the world changed around them. Bees and flowers evolved in the age of dinosaurs. By 20 million B.C., mammals replaced dinosaurs and honey bees had evolved. After the Ice Age, man hunted bees with torches and stole their honey. The smoke from these torches calmed the bees so that people could take the honey.

As the years passed, man learned to work with bees. Many agree that the first evidence of beekeeping (as opposed to foraging honey from wild bee colonies) appears in the paintings of ancient Egypt, dating from around 2500 B.C. Ancient Egyptians are believed to have kept bees in mud and clay hives. Thousands of years later, the ancient Greeks studied new ways of raising honey bees. By 50 B.C. the Romans were using melted, dyed beeswax to paint pictures. In the Middle Ages, beekeepers wearing wicker veils kept bees in straw skeps, which were put in stone shelters called bee boles.

Pilgrims brought the first honey bees to North America in the 1600s. By the 1850s, honey bees were found all the way across the continent in California. Pioneers used boxes to trap honey bees and then released them so that the bees could be followed back to the hive. In 1852, a teacher and part-time beekeeper invented the movable-frame beehive and the honey business boomed.

Answer the following questions:

Why are honey bees so interesting to scientists? _____

After the Ice Age, what did man use to hunt bees? _____

What helps calm bees? _____

Who were the first beekeepers? _____

What did the Romans use in the first century B.C. to paint pictures? _____

In what did beekeepers keep bees during the Middle Ages? _____

How did honey bees first come to America? _____

Approximately how many years did it take the honey bee to migrate across the American Continent?

Why did pioneers trap honey bees in boxes? _____

What was invented in 1852 that helped the honey business to boom? _____
