



# DRONE BEES

A drone can be seen at the entrance to the hive. His big eyes make him easy to spot. The drone is hoping there is plenty of food in store and the workers will feed him.

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## KEY FACTS

**Length:**  
15mm (average)

**Weight:**  
Approx. 0.2g

**Lifespan:**  
Approx. 55 Days

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Drones are the male bees within the colony. They make up just a small portion of the population of a hive.

Drones are larger than worker bees but smaller than the queen. Their eyes are considerably larger than that of a worker or queen bee, and cover the entire surface of their head.

## DRONE BEE DEVELOPMENT

Drones develop from unfertilised eggs and spend approximately 24 days developing in cells.

Once emerged from their cell, and with a lifespan of approximately 55 days, the drone's job is one of patience.

They cannot make wax, they have no proboscis for collecting nectar, and no pollen spikes on their legs. They are never called upon to defend the hive so they have no need for a stinger.

Drones rarely feed themselves; instead they hold out their tongues and a worker bee places honey on it. They are simply waiting for the day a young queen will fly from a hive. This is their opportunity to fulfil their role - to mate!

## DRONE BEE MATING

Drones will leave the hive daily and congregate in groups some distance from their hive. They use their large eyes to spot a young queen on her mating flight.

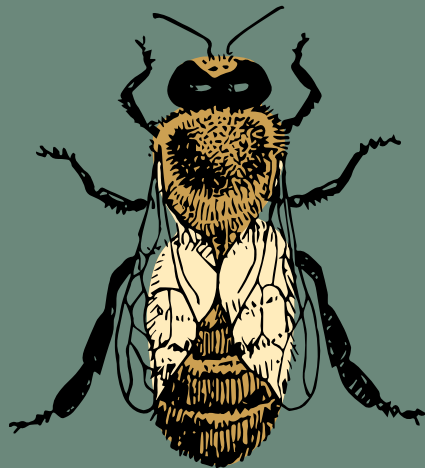
A queen will mate with 10-20 drones during a mating flight, meaning only the swiftest drones will be able to catch and mate with her. Once this occurs, the life of a drone ends. Much like the stinger of a worker bee, the drones' mating organs are attached to their internal organs. Once mating has completed, these organs are detached - killing the drone. The remaining drones return to the hive and wait for another opportunity to mate.

Once the mating season is over and the weather begins to cool, drones often find themselves evicted from their hives! As the nectar and pollen producing seasons draw to a close, worker bees attempt to conserve their food stores for the approaching winter. This means evicting those that are expendable during this time - the drones!

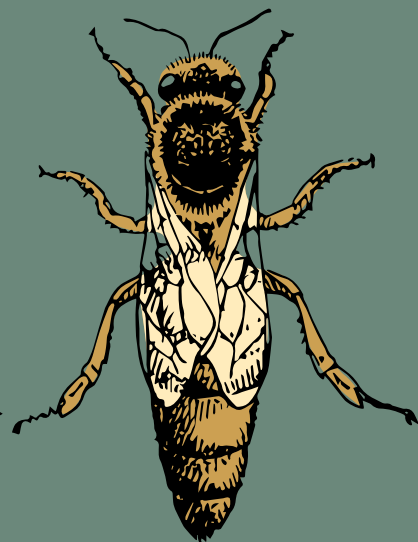
## ..... HOW DO THEY COMPARE? .....



Worker Bee



Drone Bee



Queen Bee



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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