

## HONEY BEE FAQs

**Why should I buy local honey?** Raw honey has anti-bacterial, anti-viral, and anti-fungal properties, and promotes digestive health. Raw, local honey also contains a blend of local pollen, which can strengthen a person's immune system, and reduce pollen allergy symptoms. Local honey is not processed, heated or combined with any other liquid sugar products. Most importantly, research has shown you get more than 4 times the amount of antioxidants in local versus processed, mass produced honey.

**What are the anatomical parts of a bee?**

Each honey bee has six legs, pair of compound eyes, wings, nectar pouch and abdomen.

**What is that yellow stuff I see on a bee's legs?** Pollen.

**What percent of our food is pollinated by bees?**

One third of our global food supply is pollinated by bees.

**How much honey does one bee "make?"** 1/12<sup>th</sup> of a teaspoon in its lifetime.

**How far do bees fly for pollen and nectar?** As a rule of thumb, the foraging area around a beehive extends for two miles, although bees have been observed foraging twice and three times this distance from the hive.

**At what temperature do bees stop flying?**

Bee behavior is affected by temperature. They rarely work when the temperature is below 57°F or above 100°F. They cannot fly when the temperature is below 55°F. On very hot days, bees cluster outside unshaded hives and do not work. This is called *bearding*.

**How long does a bee live?** In warm weather, approximately 42 days. In the winter, 4-6 months.

**How long does a Queen bee live?** About 2-3 years. The hive either replaces her or the beekeeper manually replaces her with a new queen. Yes, I have had to kill a poor-laying queen. They definitely take one for the team.

**Is it true most bees are female?** Yes. The queen lays mostly female eggs. Females do all the work.

**So what kind of work do they do?** During their lifetime, they serve as nurse bees taking care of eggs to capped brood, housecleaners (they are fastidious and even carry out and fly out their dead!) and foragers to the end of life. They also guard the hive and fight off predators.

**How many eggs does a Queen lay?** She lays about 1,000 eggs per day. That is enough to create a rotation of future worker generations.

**Do bees hibernate in the winter?** No. Worker bees rotate in and out of the bee huddle much like penguins do to survive the cold. They keep the hive temperature around a balmy 95 degrees.

**Why do bees swarm?** Short answer, bees swarm for additional space and to reproduce in the spring and early summer.

**What is the biggest difference between a bee and a yellow jacket?** While honey bees can attack when provoked, wasps are naturally and more aggressive predators. Honey bees are hairy, while wasps usually have smooth and shiny skin.

**Is it true we are losing bees?** Yes. Bees are harmed by the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, parasites known as Varroa mites, colony collapse disorder, and losing areas to foraging. We can manage the pesticides and treat hives for mites and plant for pollinators!! 😊

**What is the deadliest home pesticide for foraging bees?** Sevin dust. Although any product with neonicotinoids is extremely harmful. There is ongoing research on many home and agricultural pesticides and bee health.

**I see more and more backyard beekeepers. How can I help the bees in my area?**

1. plant pollinator friendly flowers and trees
2. limit pesticides
3. know who to call if you see a swarm (**Swarm Hotline 970-658-4949**)

**Colorado and National Resources:**

People and Pollinators Action Network – <https://peopleandpollinators.org/>

National Audubon Society Habitat Hero program – planting for birds and pollinators - <https://rockies.audubon.org/habitat-hero>

21 million blossoms - <https://www.2millionblossoms.com/>

Northern Colorado Beekeeping Association – [www.nocobees.org](http://www.nocobees.org)

If you are spraying for mosquitos, show extra kindness and let your neighborhood beekeeper know when spraying insecticides will occur.

**Fort Collins Recreator video presented by the Northern Colorado Beekeeping Association – NCBA Introduction to Bees (good for family watching):**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnh6Bb7PVw&t=1177s>