
A detailed illustration of a honeycomb structure. Several bees are shown interacting with the honeycomb; some are on the surface, while others are flying nearby. The honeycomb is composed of hexagonal cells, some of which are filled with a golden substance.

A honey bee colony typically consists of three kinds of adult bees: workers, drones, and a queen. Each member has an essential role in keeping the hive healthy, and individual bees cannot survive without the support of the colony.

A stylized illustration of a forest scene. A large, golden beehive hangs from a tree branch. In the foreground, a black silhouette of a bear stands near a patch of pink flowers. A blue owl is perched on a tree trunk on the right, and a white rabbit is sitting on the grass. Bees are flying throughout the scene.

Propolis is an MFA thesis project that centers around an immersive exhibit that helps educate children of all ages about the importance of saving the honey bees. Please take this packet of native flowers and plant a bee-friendly garden at home. Watch your garden grow and keep honey bees and other pollinators around for generations to come.

For more information about the project, please go to honeybee-project.com.

PROPOLIS

An immersive environment

A worker bee's job is to collect pollen and nectar. To find food, she needs to travel a couple of miles from her home to scout out plants. Honey bees see the world in ultraviolet and are attracted to flowers that are big, bright, colorful, and sweet-smelling. Let's follow a couple of honey bees as they find pollen and nectar.

When bees find nectar, they communicate with the other bees in the colony by doing a waggle dance. This tells all the other bees where the flowers are. If the flowers are found to the left of the sun, the honey bee waggles to the left. If the flowers are found to the right of the sun, the honey bee waggles to the right.

The decline of the honey bee is due to industrial agriculture, parasites/pathogens, and climate change. The loss of habitat and lack of nectar due to monocultures that lack plant diversity and bee-killing pesticides are threats for honey bees and wild pollinators. If the honey bees do not have a healthy habitat to collect nectar and spread pollen, our food supply would be less varied and less available.

Honey bees might be small but are very special and important to humankind, and it is up to you to keep honey bees healthy, happy, and alive. Start by planting a bee-friendly garden for pollinators, including honey bees. If we take small steps like these, honey bees and other pollinators will be around for generations to come.

