

Bees

Once the warmer weather starts, it is amazing how quickly insects start to appear. I was out walking last spring and passed some gorse bushes. They were in bloom and absolutely covered in bees collecting pollen.

Different Roles

These were female honey bees that may have been only three weeks old. Their first three weeks of life after emerging from the pupae is spent mainly in the hive feeding larvae, trimming cells and capping honey cells. This allows time for their wax glands to develop and they can then emerge for us to see, collecting nectar and pollen. They are commonly known as worker bees and do indeed work until they die, which in a busy summer can be as little as three weeks later.

One of the most well known things about bees is that the males are called drones and do nothing. This is not strictly true as they are responsible for the continuation of the hive by mating with the queen, which actually costs them their life. There are far fewer male bees than female bees; if they have not mated when winter comes or

there are adverse conditions, they are ejected from the hive and die.

The queen bee is a bee which has been fed on "royal jelly" continually and so grows to one and a half times the size of ordinary bees. After mating she will continue to lay eggs until almost the end of her life, which can be up to five years, far longer than the other bees which look after her.

Collaboration

The bees that form the hive all work together for the good of their hive. They each have a role to play and they all perform the tasks allotted to them. The hive is protected and food is provided, sufficient to see enough bees through the winter to start the whole process again the following spring.

Yet these creatures are tiny in comparison with so much around them. Scientists are beginning to learn more of the ways of bees such as their now famous "waggle" dance which directs other bees to rich sources of pollen. The curative powers of honey have been recognised for centuries and possible uses of royal jelly are being considered.

But while much is being discovered much is still a mystery. In these small but apparently essential insects there is evidence of the power of God in creating something that is vastly more complex than first imagined. It also has the potential to help people in providing something that not only tastes good but can help in the healing processes.



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