

Behind Closed Doors

LIFE IN THE HIVE

A honeybee colony is always busy. There's never a dull moment in the life of a bee. Always regimented and ever productive, the honeybees that produce **propolis** are on-the-go from dusk 'til dawn.

For worker bees, duties begin from birth – yes, birth. Job number one is to clean the cell in which they were born. From then on, each day is packed with chores to keep them occupied.



22+ days old

Freedom beckons! Worker bees are free to fly from the hive, pollinating plants and collecting pollen, nectar and water.

18 - 21 days old

Things get serious at this stage of the worker bee's life as they have responsibility of **guarding the hive entrance**.

12 - 17 days old

At this stage the worker bee is ready to start producing wax, building honeycomb and carrying food.



1 - 2 days old

Cleans cells & keeps the brood warm.

3 - 5 days old

Feeds older larvae.

6 - 11 days old

Feeds youngest larvae.

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

The queen bee is very special and has an extremely important job. She is responsible for keeping the colony populated and throughout April and May she lays eggs day and night.

BY MID-SUMMER THE HIVE CAN BE HOME TO UP TO 35,000 HONEYBEES

Contrary to popular belief, the queen bee does not "rule" the colony and is not considered of higher rank by the other bees, but her function is crucial, so she is afforded a high level of protection



5 mm

Each fertilised egg is stored in an individual wax cell 5mm in diameter

Unfertilised eggs are stored in larger cells reaching 7mm in diameter

7 mm



The eggs hatch 21 days after being laid & produce worker bees, which are all female

Within 24 days they become drone bees which are all male



If a new queen is required due to the death of the current queen, a special cell which hangs vertically within the hive will be used to birth her

Drone bees are destined to meet a rather sad end. As they do not work or contribute to the colony, when summer ends drone bees are pushed out of the hive and die in the cold weather.

On average the queen will lay an egg every 20 seconds – sounds exhausting!

COMPLETING THE CYCLE



Honeybees are busiest in the summer and those bees born during the summer months will only live for around 40 days.



Bees born in the Autumn are afforded a longer life span and will survive through to the following spring.

#1

There is only ever one queen bee within any honeybee colony. The reason for this has not been determined but any attempts to introduce a second queen typically results in her death.

