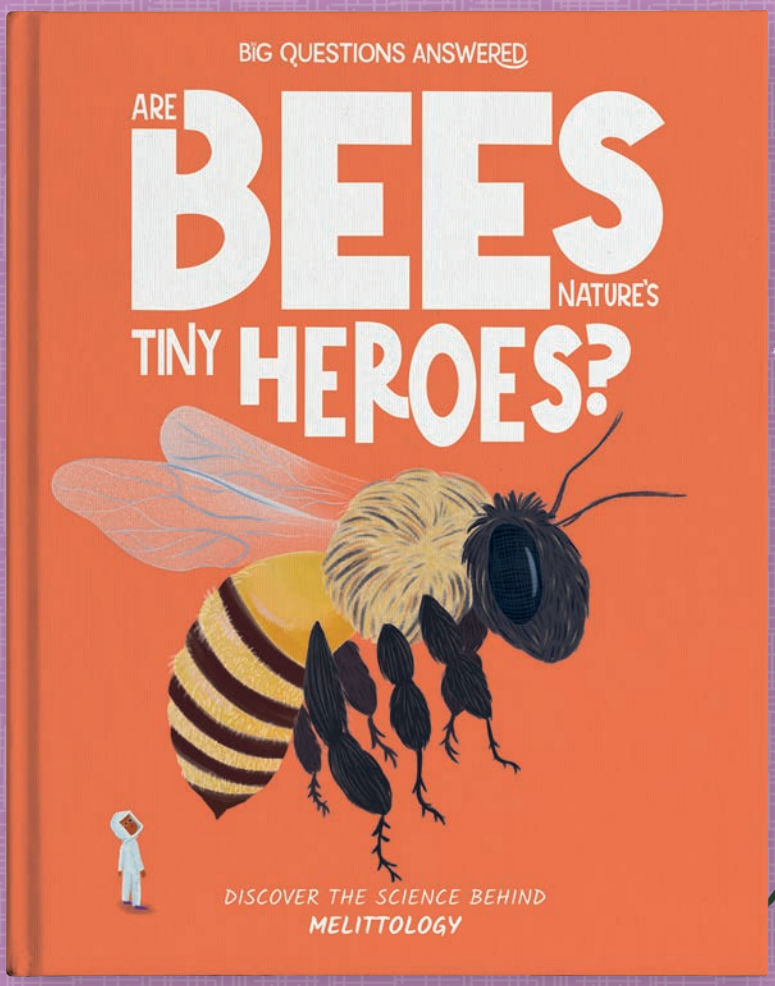
BIG QUESTIONS ANSWERED

TEACHERS' & PARENTS' RESOURCES

Full of thought-provoking questions and fascinating extra information to accompany this book!



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INTRODUCTION

NOTES FOR TEACHERS, HOME EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

Inspire children's natural curiosity, improve literacy, and have fun learning about different sciences with The Big Questions Answered. Each book in the series is accompanied by a selection of fantastic, **FREE** downloadable resources.

Our **Teachers' and Parents' Resources** booklets are full of ideas for discussions, extra facts, and links to hands-on activities – all great ways to help children explore each field of science and the key topics surrounding them.

Our **Young Scientists' Activity Packs** are a real bonus. They're full of soft-learning, fun activities, all subtly linked to the field of science, that will encourage independent learning. Visit the 'Kids' Zone' to find out more.

Don't forget, on the website you can also download our **'Meet the Scientist' pages** – there's one to accompany each book – and sign up to our newsletter to follow what's coming up next for The Big Questions Answered. Download all these and more at: **www.thebigquestionsanswered.com**

Are Bees Nature's Tiny Heroes? book

Young Melittologists' Activity Pack

KEY CURRICULUM TOPICS

The resources related to *Are Bees Nature's Tiny Heroes?* tie in with key curriculum topics, including:

- Animals, including humans
- Plants
- Creative writing and literacy
- Human and physical geography
- Living things and their habitats
- Working scientifically
- History

The most relevant topics are indicated throughout this guide.

ARE BEES NATURE'S TINY HEROES?

This book explores the extraordinary world of melittology by uncovering how bees are truly nature's tiny heroes. As well as covering key facts as to what makes bees so important to our natural world, the book also explores how honeybees make honey, how Ancient Egyptians used bees for medicine, and the many impressive features that make bees such amazing creatures.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Engage in discussion about the general topic of melittology with the suggested questions below.

- **What do you already know about bees?**
- **Where have you seen bees in the wild?**
- **Have you ever seen a bee up close? What did it look like?**

WHY ARE BEES SO SPECIAL?: SCENE 1

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: animals, including humans; plants; working scientifically; living things and their habitats; creative writing and literacy.

Introduce children to the world of bees and how important these tiny animals are in keeping our natural habitats happy and healthy.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **What tool is the person using in this scene? What other tools might scientists use to study bees?**
Information overleaf

- **What do you think makes bees so important?**
Encourage children to discuss how they think these tiny creatures are so important to our natural world.

- **Why do you think it might be important to study animals such as bees?**
Encourage children to discuss why animals such as bees might be important for scientists to study.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 3 of the activity pack: 'Diary Entry' is an activity where children are encouraged to imagine what a day studying bees in nature would involve, and write about what they might discover.

WHY ARE BEES SO SPECIAL?: SCENE 1

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

TOOLS FOR STUDYING BEES

Bees are very small creatures! So scientists must use different sorts of tools to see them, before they can properly study them. These include:

MAGNIFYING GLASS

A magnifying glass allows a close-up **inspection** of bees and their habits in their natural environment.

MICROSCOPE

A microscope has a much stronger lens than a magnifying glass. This means it can zoom in to see the parts of a bee's body in even more detail!

BEE NET

A bee net helps to capture bees so they can be studied and collected for **research**. By using a bee net, scientists can make sure they catch and release bees in a safe way.

FIELD GUIDE

A field guide helps to identify different species of bees, learn where they might be found, and discover more about their habits and **interactions** with the environment around them.

THE STORY OF POLLINATION: SCENE 2

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including:
working scientifically; living things and their habitats; animals.

Delve into the pollination journey and discover the scientists called melittologists who focus on studying bees and the positive impact they have on the environment.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **What does a melittologist do?**
Information overleaf

- **Bees carry pollen on their bodies, which helps new plants to grow. What else do you know about pollen? What do you think it looks like?**
Encourage children to discuss what they know about pollen, such as what it looks like and how lots of people are allergic to it. Information overleaf.

- **What sorts of plants do you think bees help to grow?**
Encourage children to list the types of plants they think bees help with during the pollination process. Get them to list as many as they can.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 4 of the activity pack: 'Pollination Power' is a word search activity for children to find the bee-related words in the scramble of letters.

THE STORY OF POLLINATION: SCENE 2

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

WHAT DOES A MELITTOLOGIST DO?

Melittologists are the scientists who study bees!

They study bees, their **interactions** and **habits**, and the **environments** they live in.

Melittologists spend much of their time **in the field**, using special tools and techniques to identify and learn all there is to know about different bee **species**.

By studying bees, melittologists learn how bees interact with flowers, other insects, and their surroundings.

This helps them notice the bee **populations** that are declining, understand the reasons behind these changes, and find ways to support bees and their homes.

ALL ABOUT POLLEN

Pollen is a type of powder that some plants make when they **reproduce**.

The pollen allows new plants to grow elsewhere.

During the warmer seasons, pollen is released into the air and picked up by the wind.

The more pollen that is picked up and carried, the more new plants that will grow.

Although pollen is very helpful for our planet, some people are allergic to pollen – this is called **hay fever**!

KEEPING ECOSYSTEMS ALIVE: SCENE 3

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: animals, including humans; plants; working scientifically; living things and their habitats.

Learn about the different ways that bees help ecosystems thrive, in particular how bees pollinate plants, which helps crops grow, that then feed livestock that provides us with food.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **What is an ecosystem?**
  Information overleaf

- **What is a food chain?**
  Information overleaf

- **How do you think bees pollinating plants might help us keep food on our plates?**
  Encourage children to think about the process of how growing plants might help to grow ingredients for our meals, or how growing plants feeds livestock on farms.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 5 of the activity pack: 'Honey Hunt' is a fun maze activity for children to help the busy bee collect all its lost items and escape out of the maze.

KEEPING ECOSYSTEMS ALIVE: SCENE 3

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

ECOSYSTEM

An ecosystem is an area where plants, animals, and other **organisms**, as well as weather and landscapes, work together to form life.

Every part of an ecosystem depends on another part of the ecosystem. If we have too much water or too little water, plants might suffer.

Ecosystems can be very big or very small. Your local park is an example of an ecosystem, but so is the Amazon Rainforest!

FOOD CHAIN

A food chain shows how plants and animals get their **energy**. Below is an example of a simple food chain:

PLANT ---> WORM ---> BIRD ---> FOX

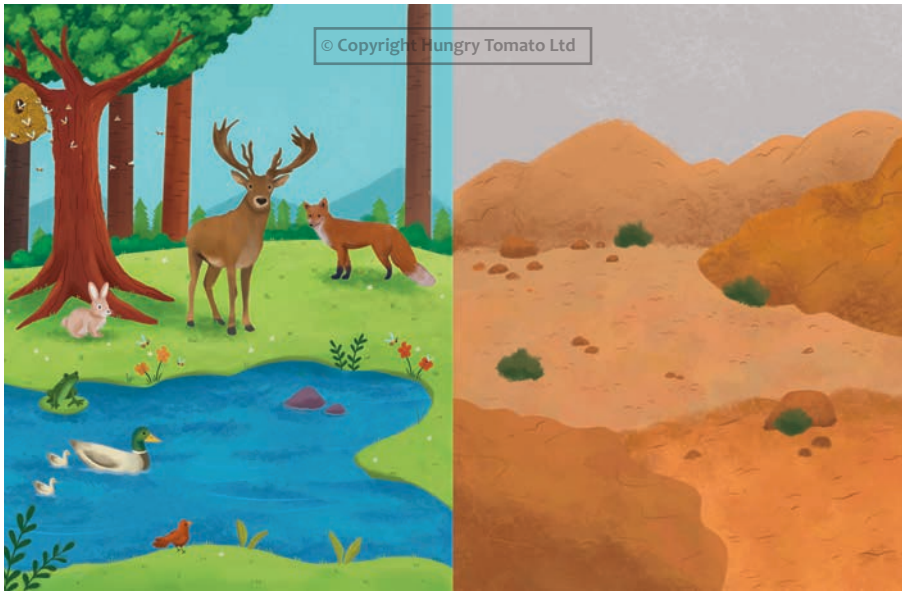
The direction of the arrows in a food chain show what is eaten by what. In this example, a plant is eaten by a worm, a worm is eaten by a bird, and a bird is eaten by a fox.

There is a food chain in every ecosystem in the world. Food chains help to keep ecosystems in balance, making sure every animal has something to eat!

A WORLD WITHOUT BEES: SCENE 4

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: animals, including humans; plants; living things and their habitats.

Explore how different the world would look without bees by focusing on the positive impact bees have on the natural world around us, including helping to maintain habitats for thousands of animals.



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **The scene above shows two very different environments. What differences can you spot between the two?**

Encourage children to talk about the differences across the split scene above, such as green vs orange, trees vs no trees, animals vs no animals, and so on.

- **Why do you think it is important for our natural spaces to look like the left side of this scene?**

Information overleaf

- **Why do you think it is important for our natural spaces to NOT look like the right side of this scene?**

Engage in discussion about different parts of the scene and why wildlife would not thrive here, such as no plants, no water sources, no animals, and so on.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 6 of the activity pack: 'A World Without Bees' is a creative drawing activity where children are encouraged to draw their local park or garden if there were no bees around to pollinate!

A WORLD WITHOUT BEES: SCENE 4

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

KEEPING NATURAL SPACES HEALTHY

Our natural world is so important.

Keeping the natural spaces around us healthy is vital for our health, as well as the health of the whole planet.

Here are a few reasons why our natural spaces are so important to look after:

THEY GIVE US FOOD.

When natural spaces are allowed to grow freely, plants are able to produce lots of the food that we eat, such as fruit and vegetables.

THEY HELP US BREATHE.

Plants, such as trees, produce **oxygen** and remove bad **gases** and particles from the air. The more trees that grow, the more oxygen there is to breathe.

THEY GIVE US WATER.

Water is what all living things need to survive! Looking after water sources, like rivers and lakes, keep surrounding animals alive and healthy, as well as the green spaces they live in.

THEY PRODUCE MEDICINE.

Lots of the parts of medicine that we use today are from things found in the natural world. Without our natural spaces, we wouldn't be able to make the medicine humans need to stay healthy.

ANCIENT EGYPT: SCENE 5

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: animals, including humans; plants; working scientifically; living things and their habitats; history.

Jump back in time and discover how bees have been helping us for generations! Explore how the Ancient Egyptians used honey made by bees in their sacred rituals, and how we still use honey today in medicine.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **Aside from eating, what else do you think honey can be used for?**
  Information overleaf

- **One of the ways the Ancient Egyptians used honey was for healing wounds. Can you think of any other periods of history where using honey might have helped?**
  Encourage children to engage with other areas of history they have learnt about, and where honey may have been useful for healing wounds, such as the Roman Empire, Iron Age, Stone Age, and so on.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 7 of the activity pack: 'Exciting Egyptians' is a fun crossword activity that encourages children to uncover the bee-related words.

ANCIENT EGYPT: SCENE 5

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

HONEY THROUGH TIME

Honey has been used for thousands of years, with a history dating all the way back to the **Ancient Egyptians**!

Ancient Egyptians used honey for lots of different things, such as **embalming** the dead and using honey in **medicine** to treat burns and infected wounds.

The Greeks and Romans used honey for its positive benefits in treating all kinds of problems, too!

In the Middle Ages, honey was an important ingredient in medieval medicines and home remedies. Some indigenous cultures even used honey in **rituals** as an offering to their gods!

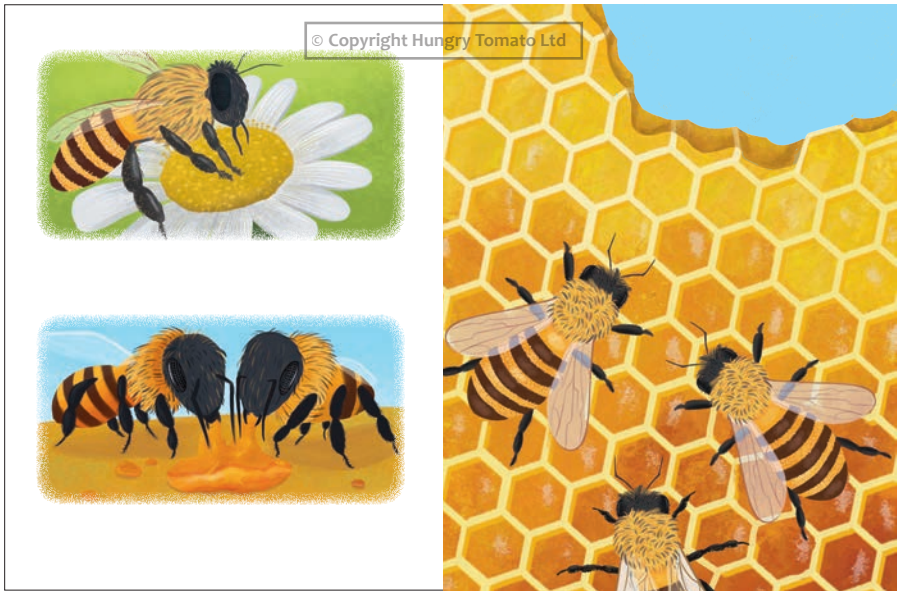
In traditional Chinese medicine, honey has been used for centuries to treat **digestive** issues and heal all kinds of different wounds.

In the modern day, honey is used for its natural **antibacterial** properties and is used in **organic** and natural remedies. We also use honey today in **wound dressings**. Honey stops **bacteria** growing on a wound and helps it heal.

HAPPY MAKING HONEY: SCENE 6

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: animals, including humans; plants; living things and their habitats.

Follow the clever journey of how bees make honey, and how they turn that honey into honeycomb. Explore how bees work together to make this incredible process happen.



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **How do you think bees make perfect hexagonal shapes in honeycomb?**
Information overleaf

- **Why do you think teamwork is important when bees make honey?**
Encourage children to discuss why teamwork is essential for bees to make honey.

- **How much honey do you think one bee can make?**
Information overleaf

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 8 of the activity pack: 'Home is Where the Honey Is' is a fun and engaging activity where children must decide if the honey-related statements are true or false.

HAPPY MAKING HONEY: SCENE 6

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

PERFECT HEXAGONAL SHAPES

Although each honeycomb **cell** is hexagonal when we see it, bees begin by building cells in a circular shape.

The warm, soft **wax** gets pulled in as the structure grows, making them into perfect hexagonal shapes.

Some scientists believe that the bees are involved in this process, forming the honeycomb in this way themselves!

HOW MUCH HONEY CAN A BEE MAKE?

Despite all their hard work, one bee can only produce a very small amount of honey.

On average, a single bee will create around 0.8 grams (up to 0.03 oz) of honey during its lifetime.

That is only one 12th of a teaspoon per bee!

That means you need 12 bees to work together their whole lifetimes to make one teaspoon of honey!

BEE-RILLIANT ABILITIES: SCENE 7

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including:
animals, including humans; living things and their habitats.

Introduce children to the amazing physical abilities of these tiny animals, by exploring the different parts of a bee.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **Can you name the different parts of a bee?**
Information overleaf

- **How do you think bees might use their bodies to communicate?**
Encourage children to discuss the different ways in which bees might communicate with each other.

- **What is a waggle dance?**
Information overleaf

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 9 of the activity pack: 'Brilliant Bee Features' is a labelling activity where children label the bee with the words provided.

BEE-RILLIANT ABILITIES: SCENE 7

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

PARTS OF A BEE

ANTENNA

These are the thin, long feelers on the top of a bee's head that help it taste, smell, and sense movement.

WINGS

Bees have thin, transparent wings that allow them to fly and travel from flower to flower. Their wings are extremely strong!

FEET

Bees have clawed feet that help them to grip onto surfaces and collect pollen.

STINGER

The stinger is the sharp, needle-like part at the end of a bee's body that it uses to defend itself against any threats.

If you have ever been stung by a bee, this is what it used to sting you!

WAGGLE DANCE

Honeybees have a very particular way of communicating – they dance!

When a bee has found a good source of food, it will return to the hive and start wiggling its body.

This is to let other bees know where to find the flowers with the most pollen, what direction they must go in to find it, and how far away it is!

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK: SCENE 8

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: animals, including humans; plants; living things and their habitats.

Discuss why working together is such an important skill, and why bees living in a colony might need to work together.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **What is a colony?**
Information overleaf

- **Why do you think bees are often called "busy bees"?**
Information overleaf

- **Can you think of any similarities between bee colonies and human communities?**
Encourage children to reflect on what they have learnt about colonies and find similarities between how human communities interact, such as teamwork, helping each other out, having different roles, and so on.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 10 of the activity pack: 'Colony Crew' is a fun and engaging activity where children must spot the 10 differences between the two scenes provided.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK: SCENE 8

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

WHAT IS A COLONY?

A bee colony is a large group of bees that live and work together in a **hive**.

In the colony, there is one **queen bee** who lays eggs. The rest of the bees are either **worker bees** or **drones**.

Worker bees are always female and take on many of the roles in the hive. They build and protect the hive, gather food, keep the hive running, and take care of the queen bee.

Drones are male bees, and their role is to mate with the queen. This means making lots of baby bees to add to the colony.

Each bee in the colony has a special job that helps the whole group survive and stay safe!

BUSY BEES

Bees are known for being busy creatures. It's where we get the phrase "busy as a bee" from!

A worker bee in particular can work up to twelve hours in one day, and they do this every day!

They spend this time working hard to carry out whatever their roles are for the hive.

SWARMING: SCENE 9

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including:
animals, including humans; plants; living things and their habitats.

Explain what bee swarming is to children, and why bee colonies must work together as a team to stay safe, through this process.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **What is swarming?**
Information overleaf

- **Why do you think bees swarm?**
Information overleaf

- **Why is teamwork important when bees swarm?**

Encourage children to discuss how working together is important for bees when they need to swarm.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 11 of the activity pack: 'Swarm Attack' is a fun activity where children must spot the odd one out of the bee swarm.

SWARMING: SCENE 9

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

SWARMING

Swarming is when one **colony** splits into two or more colonies. When bees swarm, they group together and look like a large cloud of bees!

This can look scary, but it is just a natural part of a honeybees' life.

Honeybees are the only type of bees that swarm.

WHY DO BEES SWARM?

There are a few different reasons why bees swarm, but the most common reason is that the colony needs more space to store honey and to live.

When bees swarm, they will often rest on a tree branch or a building, while worker bees go out in search of a new home.

Sometimes, bees will swarm if they are under threat from **predators**. This can include animals, such as bears and badgers, as well as humans!

Bees may also swarm if their habitat is under threat or changes. This could be due to human activity or larger global problems like **climate change** which can make finding nectar harder.

THREATS TO BEES: SCENE 10

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including:
living things and their habitats; animals.

Discuss with children the different ways that bees all over the world are under threat, and why this is bad news for the environments we live in.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **What do you think the biggest threats to bees are?**
Information overleaf

- **What is climate change?**
Information overleaf

- **How do you think climate change might affect bees?**

Encourage children to discuss how the effects of climate change may affect the world that bees live in, such as changing habitats, rising temperatures, extreme weather, and so on.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 12 of the activity pack: 'Scout Bee Finds a New Home' is a creative drawing activity where children draw a comic strip to show a scout bee on an exciting adventure.

THREATS TO BEES: SCENE 10

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

THREATS TO BEES

Despite how important bees are, they are threatened and some even face **extinction**. The main threats to bees are:

- **Pollution** and **disease**
- **Habitat loss**
- **Climate change**

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is the way in which the world's temperature and weather patterns are changing over time.

Although these may be natural changes to our planet, human activity plays a large part in climate change.

Some examples include burning **fossil fuels**, like coal and oil, and cutting down trees. Both of these examples lead to the Earth becoming warmer – an effect of climate change.

Climate change is a very important thing to learn about.

The temperature of our planet is on the rise and weather patterns are constantly changing and becoming more dramatic. Extreme weather is becoming more frequent, too.

These changes can have a huge impact on the natural world, including affecting where plants can grow and where animals can live.

With habitats changing, living things may need to **adapt** to the new conditions or move somewhere else in search of conditions that are better for them to live in.

PROTECTING BEES: SCENE 11

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: animals, including humans; plants; living things and their habitats; human and physical geography.

Introduce children to the ways that they can protect bees, and why it is so important to do so. Discuss creative ways to help these tiny creatures stay safe.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **Why do you think it's important to protect bees?**

Engage in discussion about why bees are so important, and what would happen if we didn't protect bees and our environment.

- **How do you think we can help the future of bees?**

Information overleaf

- **Would you like to help bees?**

Encourage children to discuss how they want to help bees, and why they think it's important to do so.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 13 of the activity pack: 'Design Your Own Bug Hotel' is a creative drawing activity where children are encouraged to design their own bug hotel.

PROTECTING BEES: SCENE 11

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

HOW CAN WE HELP THE FUTURE OF BEES?

Here are a few different ways that you could help protect bees, and their important role in our ecosystems:

PLANT BEE-FRIENDLY FLOWERS

Grow lots of different flowers that bees love, like sunflowers, lavender, and daisies.

AVOID PESTICIDES

Pesticides can hurt bees, so try using natural ways to keep pests away from your plants.

PROVIDE WATER

Place shallow dishes of water with pebbles for bees to drink from.

SUPPORT LOCAL BEEKEEPERS

Buy honey and other products from local beekeepers who care for bees.

EDUCATE OTHERS

Teach your friends and family about the importance of bees and how they can help.

JOIN OR START A BEE CLUB

Learn more about bees and how to protect them by joining a club or starting one at school.

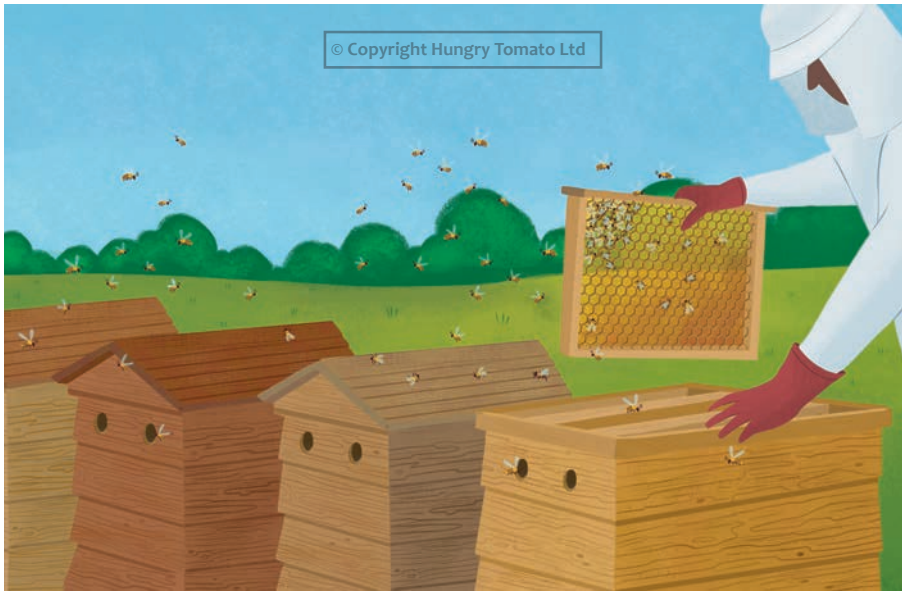
BE KIND TO BEES

If you see a bee, don't swat at it. Bees usually only sting if they feel threatened.

KEEPING BEES: SCENE 12

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: animals, including humans; plants; working scientifically; living things and their habitats.

Introduce children to the world of beekeeping and how these hard workers are helping to protect bees, by providing them with safe homes.



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **Who are beekeepers?**
  Information overleaf

- **How do you think beekeepers help bees?**
  Information overleaf

- **What do you think you might need to be able to look after bees?**

Encourage children to discuss what they might need to look after bees, such as a bee suit, gloves, a hive, feeder, and so on. Information overleaf.

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 14 of the activity pack: 'Busy Beekeepers' is a 'fill in the blanks' activity where children use the words provided and their bee knowledge to complete the sentences.

KEEPING BEES: SCENE 12

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

BEEKEEPERS

The people that keep and look after bees are called beekeepers.

They mainly keep honeybees, who produce lots of honeycomb. Colonies of bees are kept in hives, and beekeepers ensure they are well looked after and safe from predators.

Beekeepers don't control the bees – they are able to **swarm** if they wish! But beekeepers create a safe, clean home for the bees, which means they often will come back.

Bees are sometimes kept on farms to help farmers with their **crops**, too. They help food crops in particular, and they do this by **pollinating**!

BEEKEEPER CHECKLIST:

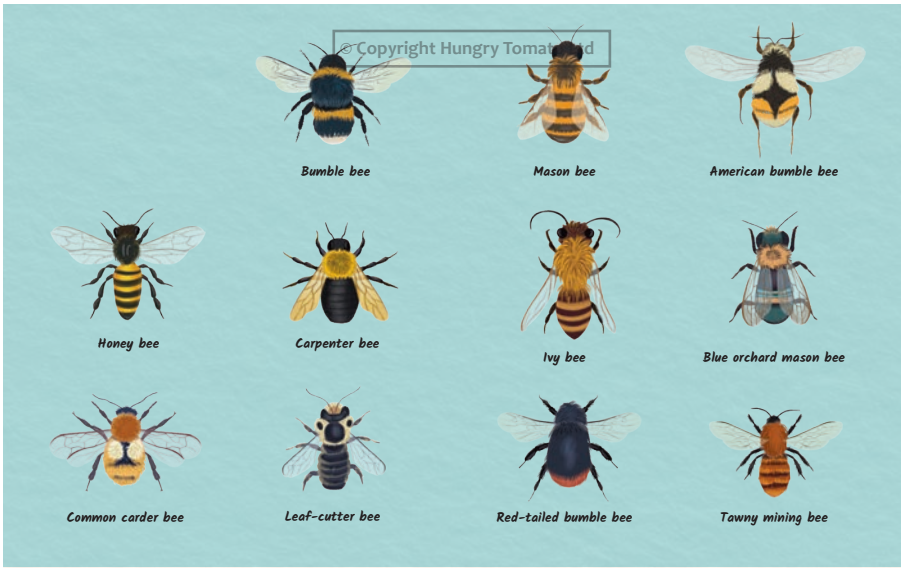
Here are a few important things that a beekeeper needs to look after and keep bees happy and healthy. These include:

- Bee suit
- Hive
- Hive tools
- Smoker
- Feeder
- And bees!

ALL SORTS OF BEES: SCENE 13

The material for this scene can be linked to curriculum topics, including: working scientifically; living things and their habitats; animals.

Conclude and discuss the importance of bees, and how they are in fact nature's tiny heroes, and how our world would be very different without them.



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- **Do you recognise any of the bees from this scene?**

Encourage children to compare the different bees and pick out features or particular bees that they are familiar with.

- **Aside from their different physical features, what do you think makes each of these bees stand out?**

Information overleaf

- **Did you know there were so many different types of bees?**

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 15 of the activity pack: 'Bees Everywhere' is a fun and engaging activity where children must research one type of bee and fill in a fact file all about it.

ALL SORTS OF BEES: SCENE 13

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Keywords that you may want to pull out and explain have been put into bold.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF BEES:

MASON BEE

Mason bees can be found in North America, and are known for using mud to make their homes, often in the gaps of old buildings or holes in cliffs.

AMERICAN BUMBLE BEE

American bumble bees are a **subspecies** of the bumblebee and are slightly bigger in size. They are found across North America, but are considered a **threatened** species.

CARPENTER BEE

Carpenter bees can often be found in **tropical** areas of the world, and are known for being **solitary** bees who do not rely on a colony and often choose to work alone.

IVY BEE

Ivy bees are a British species, discovered in 2001. This bee gets its name from mainly pollinating ivy plants and can often be seen near these plants between September and November.

BLUE ORCHARD MASON BEE

The blue orchard mason bee is a subspecies of the mason bee, found in America and Canada. It mainly **pollinates** fruit trees.

COMMON CARDER BEE

Common carder bees are found throughout Europe, usually found in gardens and woods. They are a fluffy subspecies of the bumblebee.

LEAF-CUTTER BEE

Leaf-cutter bees are best known for cutting out leaves and using them to make their nests! They mostly pollinate wildflowers.

RED-TAILED BUMBLEBEE

Red-tailed bumblebees are a type of bee that nests underground, and often live in very large groups!

TAWNY MINING BEE

Tawny mining bees are similar to red-tailed bumblebees in that they live underground. They mostly pollinate fruit trees, such as apples and pears.

POST-READING QUESTIONS

Engage in discussion about the journey taken throughout the book and the facts that were uncovered, with the suggested questions below.

- **Were you surprised to learn that bees are nature's tiny heroes?**
- **Did anything else in the book surprise you?**
- **What's the coolest thing you've learnt from this book?**
- **Do you have a favourite bee?**

ACTIVITY

Corresponding activity on page 16 of the activity pack: 'Write Your Own Melittology Story' is a creative writing activity which encourages children to write a story about melittology, using three key prompt words.

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