

The honey bee life

Types of European honey bees

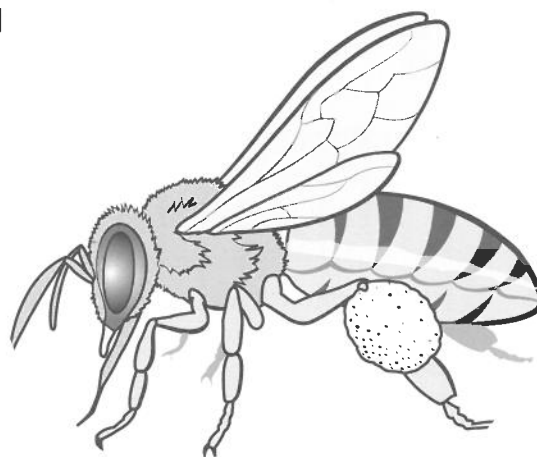
There are three types of bees: the Queen bee, the drones and the worker bees.

The **Queen** is the largest bee. Her body is specially formed for egg-laying into the cells of the honeycomb. The Queen can live up to five years.

The **drones** are stingless male bees who wait in the hive until they can mate with a Queen bee. They can wait months or just a few weeks. They die after mating.

Worker bees are female bees who do not lay eggs. They have lots to do! They find pollen and nectar to feed everyone in the hive, make honey from nectar, build honeycomb, look after the larvae and the Queen, clean the hive and defend against predators. Worker bees only live for about six weeks in spring or summer but can live for months over winter since they are a lot less busy with no larvae to care for, and less flowers to visit.

The worker bees that look for food for the colony are called 'foraging bees'. When they visit a flower they get pollen all over their body. They gather and collect the pollen into pouches on their legs but some remains. This remaining pollen can be transferred to the pistil of another flower.



Life cycle of a European honey bee

Day 1: The Queen lays eggs in cells specially prepared by worker bees. The Queen lays all the eggs for the beehive, sometimes over 1,000 per day.

Day 3: The larvae hatch from the eggs. At first, all the larvae are fed by worker bees on a special food called 'royal jelly'. This food is a white liquid made by a gland in the head of the worker bees.

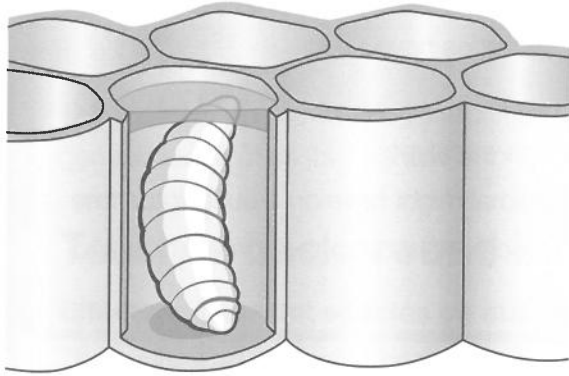
Day 6-9: The larvae that will become worker bees and drones are fed on pollen and nectar. The larvae that will become Queen bees are fed on more royal jelly.

Day 10: The larva spins itself a cocoon where it begins to change from a pupa to an adult. The worker bees place a cap of wax over the top of each cell to protect the pupa.

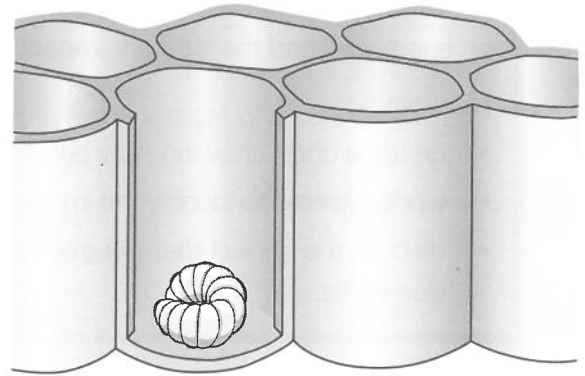
Days 16-24: The adult gnaws its way out of its cocoon and emerges as an adult bee. The amount of time it spends as a pupa depends on what type of bee it is. Queen bees take the least amount of time as a pupa and drones take the most.

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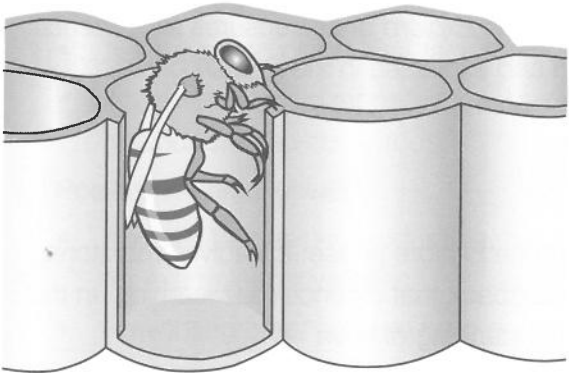
Read the text. Cut out the images below and arrange them to show the life cycle of a bee.
Add arrows, words and pictures to the life cycle.



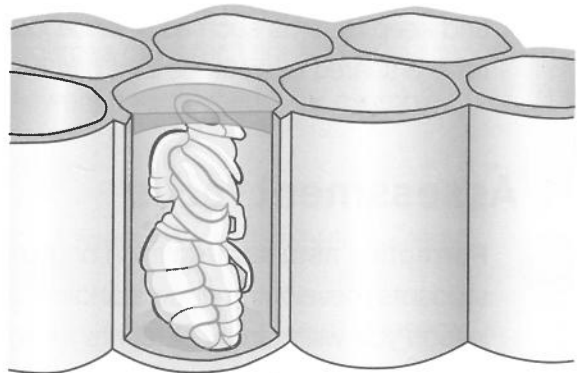
Larva day 10



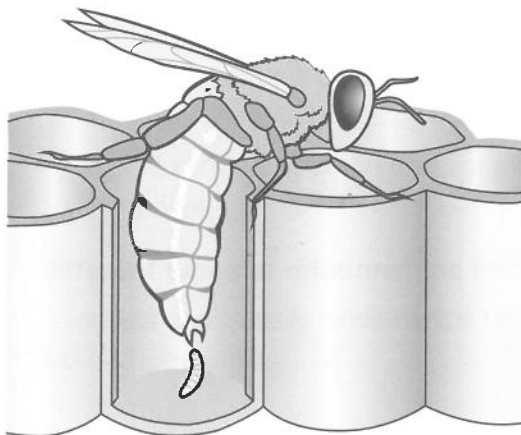
Larva day 6



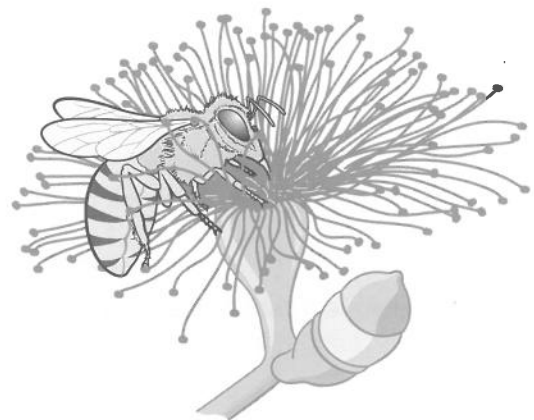
Adult coming out of cell



Pupa day 15



Queen bee lays eggs in a cell



Adult on flower