




Bees & Honey

Though you may not have a deep love for bees - or insects in general - there's no denying the importance of these busy little buzzers for both agriculture and the ecosystem as a whole. According to the USDA, "Honeybees pollinate \$15 billion worth of crops in the United States each year, including more than 130 types of fruits, nuts, and vegetables." Whether or not you're an aspiring beekeeper, I hope the books and activities in this guide will give you and your child a chance to appreciate and marvel at the beauty and of bees.

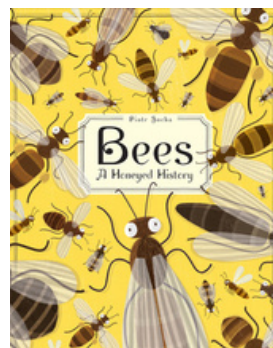
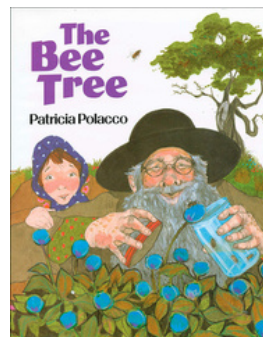
- bee books to read together
 - snack time: bee bites
 - poems and rhymes
 - getting curious about bees and honey
 - busy bee videos
 - invitation to play: bubble wrap honeycomb
 - invitation to play: collecting nectar
 - the Fort Bramble Bees & Honey badge
- 

There's a lot here to choose from, so if you're not sure where to start, pick two books that look good, one activity that sounds easy and fun, and go from there!

for ages 3 to 7-ish

Books To Read Together

- *Give Bees A Chance* by Bethany Barton
- *Honeybee Rescue: A Backyard Drama* by Loree Griffin Burns, photography by Ellen Harasimowicz
- *The Honeybee* by Kirsten Hall, illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault
- *Please Please the Bees* by Gerald Kelly
- *The Thing About Bees: A Love Letter* by Shabazz Larkin
- *The Bee Tree* by Patricia Polacco
- *Bees: A Honeyed History* by Piotr Socha
- *Bee* by Charlotte Voake
- *It Starts With a Bee* by Jennie Webber



Buy new or used, or print this list and take it to that most magical of places: your local library!

Snack Time: Bee Bites

These little honey balls are super easy to make, and endlessly adaptable.

You'll need:

- ¼ cup nut butter (or sunbutter)
- 2 tbsp honey
- ¼ cup powdered milk
- pinch of salt



To make bee bites:



Add ingredients to a bowl and mix to combine. You want a texture similar to play-dough. Add more nut butter if it's too dry, more powdered milk if it's too sticky. Roll the "dough" into balls and refrigerate until ready to eat. That's it! Serve with apple slices and a glass of milk.

Variations:

- Use rolled oats instead of powdered milk (adjust quantity as needed to get the right texture).
- Add sunflower kernels, mini chocolate chips, wheat germ, or shredded coconut to the mixture.
- Make a bee! Stick two almond slices on the top of the ball for wings, mini chocolate chips for eyes.

More Yummy Honey Snacks

Honey and yogurt

Even kids who don't enjoy plain unsweetened yogurt might find they like it drizzled with a little honey. Add fruit and granola for a full breakfast or snack.

Honey-sweetened lemonade

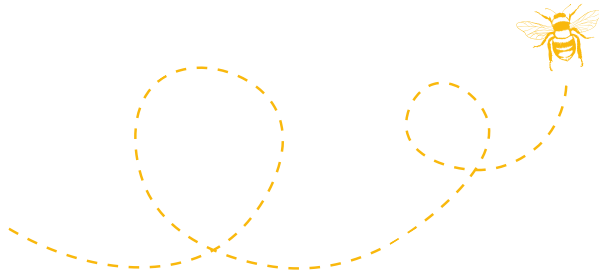
Invite your child to help make a fresh batch of lemonade, using honey to sweeten it. How much honey does it take to taste the way you like it? Squeeze 6 lemons into a pitcher or large jar (this will yield about 1 cup of juice), then stir in 4 cups of water. Add honey to taste and serve over ice.

Biscuits and honey

Buy a can of biscuit dough, a biscuit mix, or try the recipe below, and serve them hot with butter and warm honey. Yum! If don't feel like baking, you can simply have honey on buttered toast - also yummy!

Recipe: Dot's Biscuits

This biscuit recipe comes from Dot's Diner in Boulder, Colorado, and it never lets me down. My family likes to eat these with honey, jam, or sausage gravy. This recipe **makes between 8 and 12 biscuits**, depending on how big you cut them.



*No buttermilk? Use sour milk. Pour 1 tbsp vinegar into a 1 cup measuring cup, then fill the rest of the way with milk. Whisk together and let it stand for a few minutes.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 4 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsalted butter, cold, cut into small pieces
- 1 cup buttermilk*

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a Silpat.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda.
3. Using your fingers, squish the cold pieces of butter, and rub into the dry flour mixture, until it resembles coarse meal (this is a fun task for kids).
4. Pour in the buttermilk and stir until combined, but do not overmix the dough.
5. Scrape the dough out onto a well-floured surface, and pat it out so it's $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick.
6. Using a biscuit cutter or drinking glass, cut out the dough. Transfer to the baking sheet and bake for 12-15 minutes, until they are golden brown on top.

Serve warm and enjoy!

Songs, Poems, & Rhymes

“The Swarm of Bees”

One little honeybee by my window flew;
Soon came another—
then there were two.
Two happy honeybees in the apple tree;
One more bee came buzzing up—
then there were three.
Three busy honeybees starting to explore
Another bee came to help—
then there were four.
Four laden honeybees flying to the hive;
They were joined by one more bee—
then there were five.
Five tired honeybees with the others mix;
Now there’s a swarm of them—
a hundred times six.

by *Elsa Gorham Baker*

“The Bees”

Tell their story,
sweet and old.
It begins in clover;
it ends with gold.

from *On the Farm*
by David Elliott

“A Bee Sat On My Nose”

What do you suppose?
A bee sat on my nose!
Then what do you think?
He gave a little wink!
He said, "I beg your pardon,
I thought you were a garden!"
Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

give these songs a listen

“Honeybee”

by Dan Zanes
& Elizabeth
Mitchell



“Flight of the Bumblebee”

by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

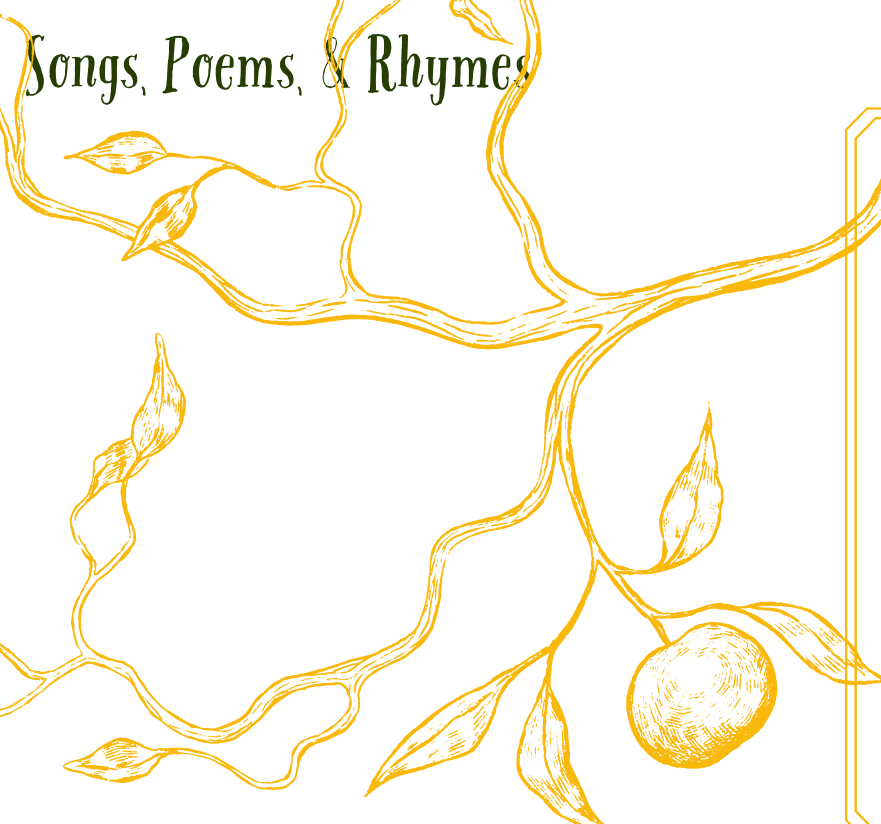


“How Doth the Little Busy Bee”

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!

How skillfully she builds her cell!
How neat she spreads the wax!
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes.

—by *Isaac Watts*



“Bees”

There wouldn't be sunflowers,
Wouldn't be peas,
Wouldn't be apples
On apple trees,
If it weren't for fuzzy old,
Buzzy old bees
Dusting pollen
From off their knees.

by Aileen Fisher

“The Bee”

Away in the meadow,
Amid the red clover,
The funniest music
Goes over and over:
The honey-bee singing
His song to the clover.
The words, they are set
To a rhythmical tune,
A rumble, and bumble,
And
zoon!
zoon!
zoon!
Zoon! goes the honey-bee, over and over,
Humming his tune to the blossoming clover.

by Gertrude E. Heath



Get Curious About Bees



BEE SAFE. Whether you have a child who is worried about getting stung, or a child who wants to touch all the bees and take one home for a pet, it's a good idea to model calm, curious behavior when it comes to bees. Explain that bees will pretty much leave you alone if you don't disturb them. When observing, you want to use slow movements and quiet voices. Learn to recognize the difference between bees and more aggressive yellow jackets and wasps. And always use your own best judgment.

POLLINATION SALAD. So many of our favorite foods rely on pollinators like bees to help them grow - without bees we wouldn't have watermelon, apples, or kiwis, just to name a few. Next time you take your child to the grocery store, have them help to pick out favorite fruits and vegetables. When you get home, do an internet search to see which ones require insect pollination. Make a salad or fruit salad with your produce, and say thank you to the bees!

OBSERVE BEES. In your backyard, at the park, or on a nature walk, take a moment with your child to notice the bees. What do the bees look like? How many can you count? Are there different types of bees? What are they doing? Do they seem to like some plants more than others? Can you follow a bee? Where does it go?

VISIT A HONEY FARM. A quick internet search can show honey farms in your area, many of which offer guided tours. Even though fewer than 4% of the world's bees produce honey, this is a great way to introduce your child to these essential pollinators.

ATTRACT BEES. In addition to planting bee-friendly flowers, you can also offer bees a watering station. Fill a pie pan with stones, marbles, or twigs (this gives them somewhere to land), then fill it with water. Place it in a sunny spot near some flowers, and wait for some happy bees to stop by!

Busy Bee Videos

“Waggle Dance”
Nova on PBS
(3 minutes)



“8-foot Long Honeycomb”
Texas Beeworks
(8 minutes)



**DO NOT TRY
THIS AT HOME!**



Invitation to Play: Bubble Wrap Honeycomb

Next time you find yourself with bubble wrap, set it aside for this art activity. Making prints with it creates a really cool honeycomb pattern. Give it a try!

You'll need:

Bubble Wrap

If you have a very large piece of bubble wrap, cut it down to a manageable size.

Paint and Brushes

You'll want **tempera** or **acrylic paint**. For a honeycomb look, limit colors to shades of yellow, orange, brown, and maybe some white. You can apply it with brushes, sponges, or rollers.

Canvas

Just about anything will do, and you can go big or small. Construction paper, printer paper, card stock, grocery bag, manila folder, you name it. Preferably something the same size as your bubble wrap.

To make your honeycomb prints:

1. If desired, cover your work surface with a plastic tablecloth, shower curtain, or sheets of newspaper.
2. Put a small amount of each color paint on a paper plate or in the sections of a styrofoam egg carton. Start with way less paint than you think you need - you can always add more!
3. Paint one side of the bubble wrap with your selected colors.
4. While the paint is still wet, press your canvas down on the bubble wrap, then peel it off to reveal your honeycomb print. Let dry.

More ideas:

- Cut your print into strips, then wrap the strips around an inflated balloon. Hang it up and it's a beehive!
- Use a black marker to draw bees on your honeycomb print.
- Cut your print into hexagons, then arrange and rearrange them to make a sort of honeycomb puzzle collage.



Invitation to Play: Collecting Nectar

This is a simple fine motor activity that lets kids experience a bit of what it's like to be a bee. You can set it up inside or out.

You'll need:

"flowers" You'll want at least three small containers to be your flowers. Jars, cups, lids, etc. will all work. It can be fun to have a variety of shapes and sizes.

"nectar" Fill each "flower" with apple juice or water tinted with food coloring. This will be the nectar.

"proboscis" A what?! A *proboscis* is like a tongue - this is how bees collect nectar. You'll want something like a medicine dropper, eye dropper, pipette, or bulb syringe.

"beehive" An ice cube tray, styrofoam egg carton, or mini cupcake pan will work. Place it at a distance from the "flowers."

To play:

Invite your child to buzz from flower to flower, collecting nectar (juice) with their proboscis (dropper), and then bringing it back to the beehive (ice cube tray).

I wonder...

...how many trips does it take to fill the beehive?

...can we do the waggle dance as we go?

...if we can do it faster as a team?

...if we were real bees, how much honey could we make from this much nectar?

...what happens if we collect different kinds of juice and combine them in our beehive?



We Tried It



- Read from the book list.
- Made bee bites.
- Tried other yummy honey snacks.
- Observed bees.
- Visited a honey farm.
- Made a pollination salad.
- Made a watering station for bees.
- Tried the waggle dance.
- Watched a honeybee rescue video.
- Made bubble wrap honeycomb prints.
- Collected “nectar.”



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