

SWEET HONEY

HASS, Technologies, Science

Where does our honey come from?

Students will:

- Understand how honey is made and collected.
- Appreciate the value of honey in the past.
- Gather relevant information from a video (and a newspaper article)

ENGAGE

- Do you like honey?
- How do we use honey? (eg. on toast, in recipes, candles, in cosmetics...)

You might like to start the lesson by offering students some honey biscuits or honey on toast!

EXPLORE

Watch a video about [how bees make honey](#). Get students to make a list of at least three interesting facts.

EXPLAIN

- The bees in the video, which give us the honey we see in the supermarkets today, are European honey bees. They were introduced to Australia.
- Australian native bees only produce small amount of honey. Harvesting large amounts of honey from native hives – especially in cooler part of Australia – can weaken or even kill the nest.
- Honey used to be a real luxury in the early days of the Swan River Colony. It took several months to bring honey over from England by boat, or several weeks from over east. It was very difficult to establish a bee-keeping industry here because many of the bees didn't survive the long sea journey from England. Discuss what sorts of foods might not have been available in the Colony at the time (eg. honey cereal, honey yoghurt, honey and soy chicken, hokey pokey ice cream etc).
- For older students, you can show an article from the 1841 *Perth Gazette*. Discuss unfamiliar words and then get students to identify the facts contained in the article.

IMPORTATION OF BEES FROM VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.—We are informed that His Excellency the Governor has received by a late arrival a valuable present of a hive of bees. Many of these insects perished on the voyage; but a sufficient number of this busy tribe still remain apparently healthy to give the hope of their being successfully reared in the Colony. We hail with pleasure the introduction of this valuable addition to our future domestic luxuries; and, although the season is unfavorable, the abundance of flowering shrubs now coming into bloom, will conduce, it is to be hoped, to the sustenance and profitable labours of these strangers to this clime. M. MacDermott, Esq., was the first importer of Bees from England, in the year 1831, but they all perished. His Excellency the Governor, we believe, is indebted to the kindness of Mr. Helpman for this novel importation.

EXTEND

Watch a video about [how honey is harvested](#).

Get students to sort out the tools and equipment that beekeepers might use from those that they wouldn't, using the worksheet provided.

Show students beekeeper's clothing, and ask if they can suggest reasons for its features (eg. thick, loose fabric which sting can't get through, net to keep bees off the face, buttons on sleeves to stop bees getting up into the sleeve, sock-like covering over shoes/bottom of trouser leg).

Discuss: why would an area like Toodyay make a great place for honey farming?



EVALUATE AND REFLECT

Show students a photo of a person scraping the wax off honey comb.

- Think about the honey making process: Can you recognise what is happening in this picture? What would the beekeeper have done just before/just after this photo was taken?



WANT TO DO MORE?

- Watch a video about [Indigenous people harvesting and eating honey from native honey bees](#), and get students to identify the difference between European and native bees.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Information about beekeeping today. <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/small-landholders-western-australia/beekeeping-small-landholders-western-australia>
- CSIRO guide to native bees. <https://blog.csiro.au/can-you-beelieve-our-guide-to-native-bees/>

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THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL. (1841, July 17). The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal (WA : 1833 - 1847), p. 2.

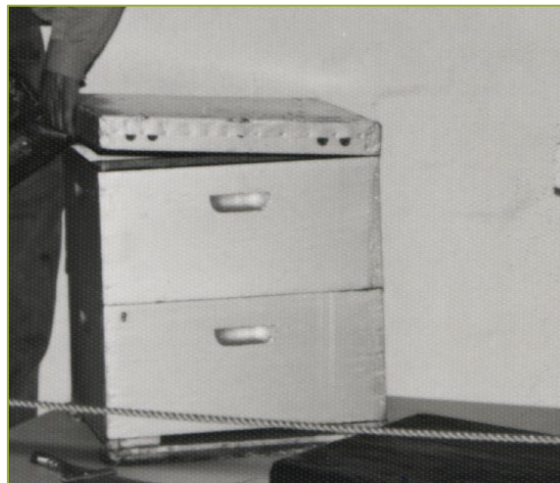
National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article642978>



Bee keepers uniform

Shire of Toodyay local history collection 2001.876a-e

WHICH ITEMS WOULD A BEEKEEPER USE?



WHICH ITEMS WOULD A BEEKEEPER USE? **ANSWERS**



✓ Knife for scraping wax off the honeycomb



✓ Smoker



✗ Shoe stretchers



✗ Oil lamp



✓ Beehive



✓ honey extractor



✗ Rope maker



✗ Coffee grinder



✗ Compass



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