



**Spectacular
Animal Towns**

The Honey Bee's Hive

A Thriving
City

by Joyce Markovics

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A Thriving City



by Joyce Markovics

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Contents


Release the Honey Bees	4
Honey Bee Town	6
Gathering Food Outside	8
Pollination	10
Dancing Bees	12
Working on the Inside	14
Queen Bee	16
A Town's Nursery	18
New Members of the Colony	20
Outgrowing the Hive	22
Colony Collapse	24
A Valuable Insect	26
Honey Bee Facts	28
More Animal Towns	29
Glossary	30
Bibliography	31
Read More	31
Learn More Online	31
Index	32
About the Author	32

Release the Honey Bees

California's almond trees were in full bloom in February 2006. Joe Traynor and his team stood under them ready to work. They had more than one million wooden boxes filled with 40 billion buzzing honey bees. Soon, the bees would zoom out of the boxes and begin their important work. In just 22 days, they would **pollinate** 600,000 acres (242,811 hectares) of almond trees!

A close-up photograph of a honey bee on a yellow flower. The bee is positioned on the left side of the flower, facing right. Its body is covered in fine hairs, and its wings are partially spread. The flower has a textured, bumpy surface. The background is a soft, out-of-focus yellow.

A honey bee

A wide-angle photograph of an almond orchard in California. The trees are in full bloom, with white blossoms covering the branches. The orchard is arranged in neat rows, and the ground is covered with green grass and fallen petals. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

An almond orchard
in California

The buzzing sound that bees make is caused by their rapidly beating wings.

Joe used to be a beekeeper. Now, he works with almond growers to make sure they get enough bees to pollinate their trees at the right time. Through his work, Joe has been able to see firsthand how honey bees live.



After the flowers on an almond tree are pollinated, they will eventually shed their pink and white petals and turn into almonds, which are what the seeds of the fruit of the almond tree are called.



This beekeeper is unloading bees in an almond orchard in California.

Honey Bee Town

Honey bees are **insects** that live in **hives**. Just as many people live and work in a city, up to 50,000 honey bees live and work in a hive. This home is made up of a **honeycomb**, which bees build inside hollow trees, on tree branches, in holes in the ground, or in beekeepers' wooden boxes.



Beekeepers wear special clothing to protect themselves from stinging honey bees.

Due to a decreasing number of honey bees in the wild, more than half of the honey bees in the United States are raised by beekeepers. They are kept for the honey they make and their ability to pollinate the plants that people grow for food.

Honeycombs are built using beeswax that the insects make from special **glands** in their bodies. The bees chew the wax to shape it into thousands of tiny rooms called cells. These rooms are used in many different ways. For example, cells in the center of the hive hold baby bees. The outer rooms store food.



The cells in a honeycomb each have six sides.



Honey bees made this hive inside a beekeepers' wooden box.

Index

- almond trees 4–5, 11, 26
- beebread 19
- beekeepers 5, 6, 24
- brood cells 18, 20
- cells 7, 14–15, 18, 20–21, 23
- cocoon 20
- colony 8, 15, 16–17, 22, 24, 28–29
- Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) 24–25, 27
- crops 11, 25, 26
- drones 17, 21
- eggs 17, 18
- flowers 5, 9, 10–11, 12–13
- food 7, 8–9, 10–11, 12–13, 14, 25, 27, 28
- foragers 8–9, 10–11, 12–13, 14–15
- hives 6–7, 8–9, 12, 14–15, 17, 21, 22–23, 24
- honey 15, 19, 27, 28
- honey bee dance 12–13
- honeycombs 6–7, 14, 22–23
- larvae 18–19, 20, 23, 24
- metamorphosis 21
- nectar 8–9, 15, 28
- plants 11, 25
- pollen 8–9, 10–11, 14, 19, 28
- pollinate 4–5, 6, 10–11, 26–27
- pupae 20–21
- queen 16–17, 18, 22–23, 28
- royal jelly 19, 23
- swarm 22
- Traynor, Joe 4–5, 26–27
- weaver ants 29
- wings 4, 15, 21
- worker bees 8–9, 10–11, 12–13, 14–15, 16, 18–19, 20–21, 23, 28
- yellow jackets 29

About the Author

Joyce L. Markovics is an editor, writer, and an insect lover. She lives with her husband, Adam, who kindly tolerates her fascination with six-legged creatures.

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Animal Towns**

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A Thriving
City

In the complex, busy world of the honey bee's hive, the little insects that live there work nonstop. Some of the bees care for the young while others are responsible for cleaning the hive. Many go out each morning to collect the bees' favorite foods—nectar and pollen. At the center of this small world is the queen bee. She is the only one that can lay eggs, which she does every day. Under her direction, the hive thrives. Look inside to find out more about this busy world—and why it is so important to humans.

The Ant's Nest

A Huge, Underground City

The Bat's Cave

A Dark City

The Beaver's Lodge

Building with Leftovers

The Coral Reef

A Giant City Under the Sea

The Honey Bee's Hive

A Thriving City

The Prairie Dog's Town

A Perfect Hideaway

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