







by Joyce Markovics

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Credits

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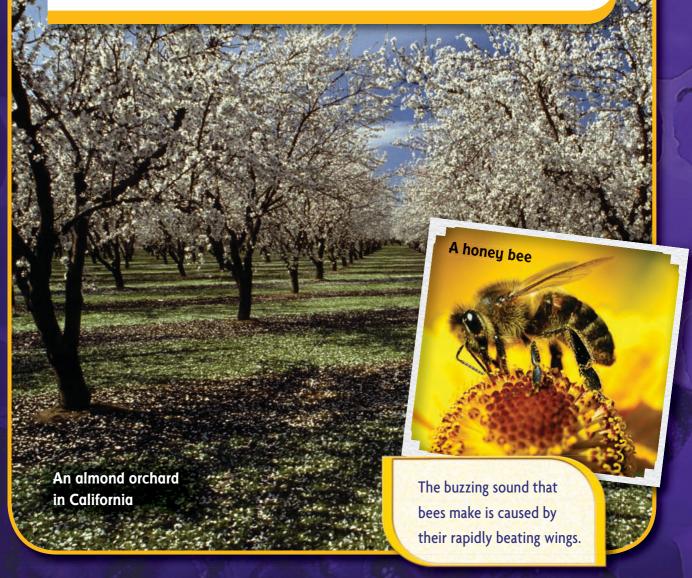
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Release the Honey Bees

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!



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.



hive inside a beekeepers'

wooden box.

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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.





The Concy Bee's 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



