

## Watching a Beekeeper

by Joan Davis

I froze in place as a cloud of honeybees buzzed around my head and arms. My only hope was that the big fancy net I was wearing would keep the bees out. You see, my friend Frank is a beekeeper. He not only keeps bees but he loves them, too. I joined him on this warm spring day to see how a beekeeper starts a new hive.

Frank needed some more hives, so he called a nearby bee ranch to order two boxes of bees. A few days later, the buzzing, pulsating boxes arrived at the post office. Each box was filled with more than ten thousand bees. A postal worker called Frank and asked him to please hurry and pick them up!

Honeybees had always seemed scary to me. But as I watched Frank work, I learned something. I learned that if you know how to handle bees the right way, beekeeping can be a great hobby.

Frank and I each wore a helmet and a net to protect us from bee stings. We used string to tie our pants around our ankles to keep any lost honeybees from crawling up our legs.

For hives, beekeepers use boxes with narrow wooden frames hanging inside. On each frame is a sheet of thin wax. The honeybees produce more wax from their bodies to make six-sided boxes, called cells, on these sheets. The queen bee lays eggs in some of the cells, and the bees store honey and pollen in others. Each cell is just big enough for a honeybee to squeeze inside.

Frank sprayed sugar water on the mass of bees in the center of the mailing box. For a few minutes, this makes their wings too sticky to fly. Then he reached in for the tiny box containing the queen bee.

“Aha,” whispered Frank, “and here she is.” His voice was quiet but excited. He slipped the queen’s box into his pocket to keep her safe. The queen is important to the hive, and the other honeybees will attack to protect her.

Moving quietly, he dumped the rest of the honeybees from the mailing box into the hive. After spraying the queen with sugar water, he took her out of the special box and placed her in her new home. He covered the top of the hive with a lid. Then he smiled at me and said, “Not one sting. They must really like you!”

Next, Frank opened a little door at the bottom of the hive. This would let the honeybees fly in and out to gather nectar and pollen for the hive. Honeybees use nectar to make honey. They use honey and pollen as food. Soon the queen would start laying eggs, and the hive would grow. Frank’s work for the day was done. Later in the summer, I saw Frank again. He proudly presented me with a big jar of sweet, tasty honey made by my friends the honeybees.

1. Why does Frank spray sugar water on the bees?

- A. To give them special food.
- B. To make their wings shiny.
- C. To keep them from flying.
- D. To make them produce honey.

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2. Which of the following words is similar to the word pulsating as it is used in this story?

- A. Vibrating
- B. Stinging
- C. Loud.
- D. Scary

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3. The main idea of this passage is:

- A. To warn the reader about the danger of bees.
- B. To entertain the reader with humorous stories about bees.
- C. To inform the reader with interesting facts about bees.
- D. To convince the reader to start raising bees.

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4. This passage suggests that:

- A. Bees are safe can be safe to handle if you take the proper precautions.
- B. Bees are simple to get if you order them in the mail.
- C. You should never handle the queen bee because the other honeybees will attack
- D. Bees will die if ever taken out of their hive.

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5. Why did Frank spray sugar water on the bees?

- A. So that they wouldn't sting him
- B. So that he could move the bees into the hive
- C. To stop them from producing any more honey
- D. So that they could be put in a box and mailed

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On a scale between 1 and 10 with 1 being low and 10 being how well did you like this passage?

Didn't												I Really
Like It	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		Liked It
At All												

**Self Assessment: Without looking back in the passage can you recall 1) 2 things that Frank and the author used to protect themselves from the bees and 2) what bees use to make honey?**