

The Honeybee

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Abstract

The **Columbian Exchange** was the transfer of people, plants, animals, and diseases across the Atlantic Ocean between the Old World and the New World. We studied the importation of honeybees from England to the Americas and their impact on their new habitat and the people in the colonies. We found that the honeybee created useful products for the colonists and was also an important pollinator in the Americas. The honeybee continues to pollinate plants in the United States today, and although it did not originate here, the honeybee is a vital piece of the ecosystems of North America.



Important Roles

The bees not only have a continued importance in today's society, but were also used in early America. Bees made products that had **economic impact**, as they were traded and bought. Honey was the most useful food sweetener until the sugarcane became popular, but was still widely used. Honey was also popular because unlike maple syrup, molasses, and maple sugar, it didn't need to be processed. In addition to a sweetener, honey was used as medicine and a brewing agent. Bees were also useful because of their wax. Beeswax emits no odor and no smoke when burned, making it favorable for candle making over cow tallow, bear tallow, or whale oil. Bees were also used in honey hunting, one of the first **cultural** pastimes in America.



Continued Importance

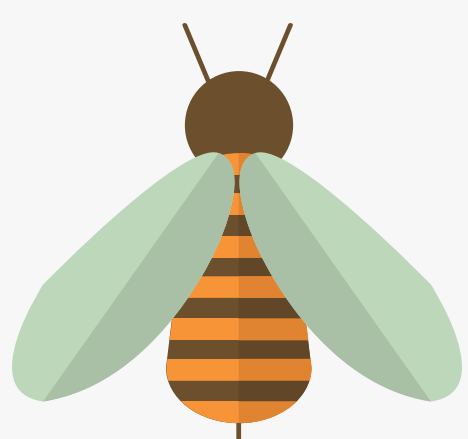
Honeybees are used for honey and wax, although they are most importantly used for the pollination of crops. Approximately one third of America's crops today rely on honeybees for pollination, a sign of continued **biological impact**. Crops such as the strawberry, cucumber, melon, and squash are pollinated mainly by the honeybee. As hives are imported across the world, the honeybee has continued **economic impact**. Californian almond farms rent one million hives a year, which is about one billion bees each year. Beehives are imported to both New York and Maine to pollinate apples and blueberries. Hives are often owned by professional beekeepers who run large, commercial honeybee farms. Beekeepers form beekeeping clubs which is an example of the **cultural impact** of honeybees. However, certain species of bees are becoming endangered from habitat fragmentation, mites, diseases, and pesticides.

Deliberate Importation

The honeybee was brought to the new world deliberately. In 1609, Englishmen decided to bring beehives to the new world. After landing in **Bermuda**, the bees made their way up to the Americas, and have a noted presence in Jamestown in 1621.

Origin

The honeybee originates from the Old World and was first brought to America in 1609 by an Englishman on a ship named the **Sea Venture**. The ship was blown off course and landed in Bermuda, but the honeybee did not arrive in mainland America until 1621. They were sent by the Virginia Company to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Many families had hives in their personal gardens, and they spread around America from the colonies.



Biological Impact

The honeybee is an important **pollinator**, which means that it transfers pollen from one plant to another, allowing for the plants to reproduce and flourish. When it came to America, it had a large **biological impact** as it began to pollinate native plants. An Englishman named William Blackstone came in 1623 and planted apples in Boston. When they did poorly, the Puritans brought bees from England because they remembered them from apple orchards, and the apples flourished. Another biological impact was that some animals ate the honey.



Citations:

<https://goo.gl/7MiTKk>