

Friends of the Honey Bee Newsletter

Vol. 10 Summer Term 2026



Summer is coming!

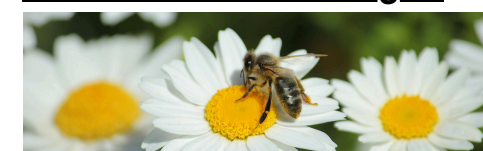
After a warm spring it feels like summer isn't far away. Both plants and insects have sprung into action with the lengthening days. During this summer term, students and teachers face rising pressures as exams draw near; similarly, various insect species are experiencing their own challenges. Throughout the summer, the race intensifies to complete their life cycles while competing for mates, shelter, and food! This period marks the busiest season for honey bee colonies, as worker bees fill the hive with honey in preparation for the winter months ahead. If the colony is strong enough, they may swarm to reproduce, creating a hectic time for beekeepers who must take action to control this!



[Find out how King Edward VI Academy dealt with the honeybee swarm at their school on page 3.](#)

Have your pupils engaged in any environmentally focused projects or activities?

We would love to see the results and share ideas!
schools.officer@bbka.org.uk



What's Happening in the Hive?



In the wild, honey bees create hives in trees or other suitable spaces. Beehives are designed to replicate wild hives while enabling beekeepers to inspect the colony. [Click here to learn more about beekeeping.](#)

May: A strong colony should be expanding and ready for reproduction, leading to a swarm. Beekeepers manage this to prevent nuisance to neighbours and a loss of honey bees. Swarm control can also increase the number of colonies for the beekeeper.

June: Regular inspections to prevent swarming are ongoing. Food shortages may occur, so beekeepers provide supplementary food if needed. However, in areas with ample forage, the first honey harvest might begin.

July: As colony growth slows, bees focus on storing honey and pollen for winter. Beekeepers must manage the hive carefully to provide the bees with enough space to fill with winter stores and hopefully harvest some honey for themselves!

August: If successful, this is the time to harvest honey, ensuring bees have enough left for winter. Honey is removed in frames and extracted using several different methods, before being jarred and sold. Beekeepers also start pest and disease management preparations.

Who's That Bee?

In Britain we have only one species of honey bee, but around 270 species of other bees! They are wild and many live solitary lives. This year we are following the: [Patchwork Leaf-Cutter Bee, *Megachile centuncularis*](#).

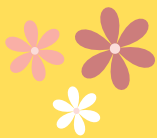


Patchwork Leaf-Cutter Bee

Between May and August the Patchwork Leaf-Cutter Bee can be seen on the wing, collecting nectar and pollen which it carries on a pollen-collecting-brush under its abdomen.

Also easy to spot when carrying parts of leaves, which it uses to build nests in holes in wood. You may notice circles cut out of plant leaves, a sign this bee has been at work!

Gardening for Insects



Honeybee on Cornflower

- Now is the time to add more flowering plants to your garden - [find plants to benefit pollinators here](#). No matter how big or small your outdoor space is, it can provide food and shelter for insects!
- Leave areas of lawn to grow long, [take part in No Mow May](#).
- Keep ponds full and [create watering station's for insects](#).
- Avoid using pesticides; weed killer and insect deterrents can be harmful to many insects, even in small doses. [See organic gardening techniques](#).

Does your school have a wildlife garden or any features for insects? Please share with us!

Protecting Pollinators

Honey bees are pollinating insects, alongside at least 1,500 other insects in the UK!

Pollination is an essential ecosystem service.

Three quarters of crops grown in the UK require insect pollination.

Pollinating insects are in rapid decline, many factors contribute to this such as:

Habitat Loss

All habitats are important regardless of size; small ponds, hedgerows or individual trees connect habitats for locally migrating insects. It's important to protect small habitats and their features to maintain healthy larger habitats.

Drought

Like all life, pollinators need water to survive. Many insects experience stress from heat and lack of water during droughts. Hot, dry periods also affect plants; reducing flower abundance and nectar production, providing less food for insects.

These issues affect all native wildlife, see the [State of Nature Report](#) for more information.

World Bee Day: 20th May

You might find a [local beekeeper](#) to present a talk about beekeeping or use these [online resources](#) to investigate the world of honey bees. Discover how honey bees communicate through dance by playing the [Waggle Dance Game](#)



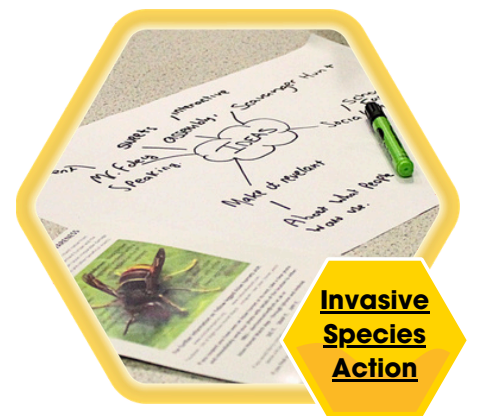
[World Bee Day Video](#)



[Conduct a BioBlitz](#)

Invasive Species Week 22th-28th June

Invasive species such as Yellow-legged Asian Hornets directly impact pollinators, while invasive plants compete with the native plants that pollinators depend on. Raising awareness can include games and activities which encourage pupils to be aware and take care of our environment!



[Invasive Species Action](#)

Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet Awareness



Pollinator Protectors Project

The British Beekeepers' Association is currently developing a new, fully resourced educational project designed to support schools in exploring pollinators, biodiversity, and invasive species through meaningful, real-world learning. [More information on page 4 or register interest here.](#)

Please share updates and photos as well as feedback to: schools.officer@bbka.org.uk

Summer Holiday 2025 - KEVI Bees Are Buzzing!

Back in the summer of 2025, while the school community enjoyed a well-earned break, the team at King Edward VI Academy in Spilsby were busy caring for their new honey bees! The hive and colony were installed in Easter 2025 and have thrived in the eco-friendly, pollen-rich environment at King Edward VI Academy, producing their first batch of honey! Please take a moment to check out this amazing journey.



Our KEVI BEES' Journey



King Edward VI Academy



"A special thank you to everyone who made this possible, especially Mr. Matt Carr, our resident trained beekeeper, and Mrs. Kelly Boden, who has taken a real interest in beekeeping and even designed our very own KEVI honey label. This wonderful addition to KEVI wouldn't have been possible without their dedication and passion."

THE BUZZ ON BEES

Honey bees have been producing honey for at least 150 million years	To make one pound of honey, honey bees need to visit approximately 2 million flowers
Their wings beat about 200 times per second and can fly up to 15mph	A single hive can contain up to 50,000 bees, and they communicate through dance
Bees are responsible for pollinating approximately one-third of the world's crops, including fruits, vegetables, and nuts	

Our KEVI BEES' Journey

SPRING

We welcomed a nucleus box of approx. 10,000 worker bees and a strong mated queen. We settled them in within a secluded area in our KEVI grounds. Late spring saw the colony grow rapidly in numbers, working hard, laying brood and collecting nectar throughout a very sunny spring

SUMMER

As the colony grew stronger we transferred them to a hive of one brood box and two supers. As with many other bee keepers throughout the UK this year we also had queen troubles, resulting in problems of re-queening the colony and our honey bees reducing in number due to the lack of brood. To rectify our numbers we situated a Bait Box to catch a swarm of bees, we successfully caught a large swarm with a mated queen. We slowly introduced this swarm to our hive. In late summer the bees had produced enough honey for us to harvest. We spun 1 1/2 supers, which is equivalent to 21kg+ of sweet honey! We forecast that our honey harvest will be 4 times this amount next year

AUTUMN

The worker bees are still collecting nectar and producing honey. After honey extraction we've acted on the optimum time to treat our colony for varroa mite. These mites are present in most colonies and carry diseases which can affect the health and form of the bees

WINTER

As the queen prepares for winter she will lay fewer eggs and the colony will naturally reduce in size. The colony's main goal during the winter months is to keep the queen warm and fed. The colony will feed off the honey that they have produced throughout the year until warmer days return in the spring

First honey extraction - jarred and labeled ready to enjoy!



Pollinator Protectors!



A free and fully resourced educational project designed to support schools in exploring pollinators, biodiversity, and invasive species - through meaningful, real-world learning.

Free resources include:

- lesson sequences and teaching guidance
- pupil activities and recording materials
- monitoring and observation guidance
- curriculum links to English, Maths, Science, Art & Design
- adaptation guides for different settings



A classroom-based citizen science programme that introduces pupils to the ecological impact of invasive species, with a focus on the Yellow-legged Asian hornet. Through structured activities, pupils will learn how monitoring supports national efforts led by the National Bee Unit (NBU), helping to protect pollinators and wider ecosystems.

HELP NATIONAL EFFORTS TO CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES

This project has been carefully designed to fit within a practical and valuable window in the school year. Following the completion of Key Stage 2 SATs, Year 6 pupils enter a transitional period before moving on to secondary school.

This time presents a unique opportunity for:

- project-based learning
- enrichment activities
- consolidation of key skills
- meaningful, real-world application of knowledge



Pollinator Protectors provides a structured, purposeful way for pupils to engage in collaborative projects, outdoor observation and environmental stewardship.



Photo: Angus Deuchar

Developed by the BBKA, with support from the Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA)

FOR MORE INFORMATION & TO REGISTER INTEREST