



Our honey bees

For the first time in our garden we got to record and document the native black Irish Honey Bee who used our garden nectar to fill up their hive. We discovered that the hive could be as far as 3 km away from our garden and that the worker bees can make this journey to collect nectar several times a day. They really are busy bees!!!

**Workers are all
female- they mustn't
have heard we're an
all boys school!!!**



THE QUEEN HONEY BEE



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**Our native Dark Honeybees
has many important qualities
that have evolved over
thousands of years, making it
uniquely suited and well
adapted to survive in a harsh
Irish climate.**

**It has evolved a larger body
and has the longest dark
abdominal hairs of all the
European races, to help keep
it warm in a cooler climate,
and with a shorter breeding
season to reflect the Irish
summer.**

Heather honey and ivy is unsuitable for winter stores for other races and causes dysentery and soiling within the hive. Our native bee has evolved to thrive on heather and ivy as winter stores.

In Ireland the native honeybee was practically wiped out a century ago by what is known as the Isle of Wight disease, which was spread in hives by a mite.

**There are only
isolated pockets of
black Irish bees
dotted around the
country.**

**This endangered
species have
survived on this
island for the last
10,000 years.**

The average lifespan of the queen in most subspecies is three to four years.



Honey bees are truly amazing creatures. They can travel up to 5km from the hive in search of pollen. They have an ingenious ability to communicate to their community just where they sourced the pollen – the waggle dance.

- A hive can contain up to 80,000 honeybees.

Other bees are either moving quickly or just hanging and not moving. The queen moves slowly and gracefully. It's like she's waltzing.

A large bee that keeps appearing outside the nest may be a "new queen" that is emerging. However, this "new queen" will not be a queen until next year. For now, whenever she leaves the nest, she will find a nice warm spot under some leaves and spend the winter there, then in the spring next year she will start a new nest of her own.