

BEE-hind the Scenes

Part 1: Honey Bee Research and

Beekeeping Basics



Featuring: Dr. Jamie Ellis and Lauren Roberts

Main Ideas

- Honey bees found in North America were originally brought overseas by early settlers in the 1600s with the original purpose of honey production.
- A common misconception of honey bees is that numbers are in decline, particularly from colony collapse disorder. While bees are susceptible to health risks like any other animal, beekeepers are constantly managing their colonies to recover their losses keeping the overall population mostly stable.
- Causes for honey bee decline include bacterial, viral, and fungal diseases. Parasites like the Varroa mite can transmit viruses that are harmful to colonies.
- The UF/IFAS Honey Bee Research and Extension Laboratory (HBREL) teaches courses, conducts research on beekeeper needs and honey bee sustainability, and distributes information on honey bees to clientele through Extension.

Discussion Questions

1. Why might honey bees be referred to as "The Angels of Agriculture"?
2. How can media play a role in communicating honey bee issues? What are some positive and negative effects of media coverage?
3. How can you utilize resources provided by UF/IFAS HBREL?
4. What are some ways you can support the honey bee industry?

Tips from the Speaker

1. If you are interested in beekeeping, find a mentor to shadow and learn from.
2. The Bee College offered by UF/IFAS HBREL is a great opportunity to learn about the industry and grow your skills in beekeeping.
3. Develop a pollinator-friendly landscape to benefit honey bees and native bee species.

Other Resources

entnemdept.ufl.edu/honey-bee

PIECENTER.COM/MEDIA/PODCAST



BEE-hind the Scenes

Part 2: A Family-owned Honey Business

Featuring: Mike Thomas and Kortney Stewart



Main Ideas

- Three generations work collectively in Thomas Honey to produce high quality products from their honey bees.
- Honey bees gather nectar and pollen from flowers to create honey and feed bee larvae.
- Nectar is returned to the hive, fanned by the bees to reduce moisture, and sealed with wax.
- Beekeepers use machinery and tools, like an extracting machine, to collect honey, which then is processed, packaged, and distributed to the public.
- Honey products are commonly used by consumers for their health benefits, like improving gut health and treating wounds due to its antiseptic properties.
- Beekeepers work in a complex industry to support other sectors of agriculture, such as crop production through bee pollination.

Discussion Questions

1. How has beekeeping changed over the years?
2. Were you aware of the labor and time requirement of producing honey before listening to this podcast? How have your thoughts on beekeeping changed?
3. What are some benefits of using products of bees?
4. Did you learn about new ways that you can incorporate bee products into your daily life? If so, what ways?
5. In what ways can beekeepers work towards creating a more sustainable industry?
6. In what ways can you support your local beekeepers?

Tips from the Speaker

1. Create a beneficial environment for honey bees by creating a bee garden with pollinator-friendly plants.
2. Support beekeepers by purchasing bee products from local operations.
3. "When you enjoy your work, it's not really work." -Mike Thomas

Other Resources

www.thomashoney.com

PIECENTER.COM/MEDIA/PODCAST

