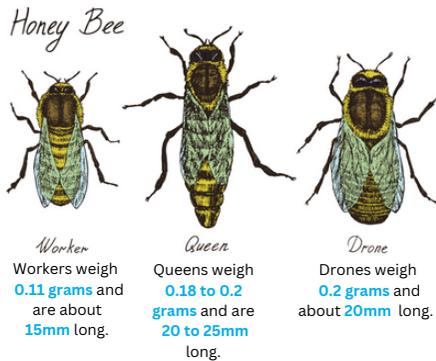


Drones 101

Drones...chubby freeloader...or crucial hive citizen?
Let's take a closer look at the male honeybee.

Drones have about double the mass of a worker bee but about the same mass of a queen. They are longer than a worker bee and slightly shorter than the queen.



Drones are born in the spring. For the first 12 days of their life, they gather up energy while their reproductive organs mature. They typically live 20 to 60 days.

Drones have no stinger so they can't defend themselves.

A drone's tongue (proboscis) is smaller and shorter than a worker bee's so it can't feed itself from flowers. It can eat honey from cells that are close to full. Otherwise they are fed by worker bees.



In order to ensure that a colony's genetics are dispersed, drones typically do not mate with a virgin queen from the same hive. If a drone does mate with a queen from the same hive, the resultant drone larvae will often be eaten by worker bees to recycle the protein.

It takes a drone about 17 minutes to fill up on honey before being able to do a second mating flight.

A drone's maximum flying time for mating is only about 20 minutes. After that he must return to the hive to refuel before attempting another mating flight.



A drone's eyes are more than twice the size of those of a worker bee. The eyes allow the drone to better spot a virgin queen flying through a mating congregation zone.