

EXTENDED INFORMATIONAL READING COMPREHENSION:
THE BUZZ ABOUT BEEKEEPING



Keep going! Continue reading, and then answer the questions that follow.

THE SWEET AND THE STING

14 Honey bees, though small in size, play a major role in the life of our planet. Apiculture provides humans with useful products and crucial pollination for crops. Honey bees help wild plants, too, but in some places these bees can disrupt ecosystems and harm native insects and plants. Overall, the buzz about beekeeping is that it has clear benefits, but perhaps also a hidden sting.



COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER

In 2006, North American beekeepers started reporting a mysterious condition harming their honey bee populations. For reasons still not understood, worker bees were abandoning their hives and the queen bee. Without the worker bees, a colony can't survive. This disorder was named colony collapse disorder (CCD) in 2007. As people learned about this issue, many jumped into action. Dr. David Tarpey, a professor at North Carolina State University, saw a great increase in hobby beekeeping after news of CCD spread. He said of the new beekeepers, "most of them are getting into it because they hear that bees are in trouble."

Answer the questions about the text.

1 What is the main idea of the passage?

The main idea of the passage is that beekeeping has a variety of positive and negative effects for both humans and the environment.

2 What is the author's most likely purpose for writing this piece?

- a. to provide a practical guide for starting a beekeeping hobby
- b. to argue for more local beekeeping programs around the world
- c. to speak out against the use of honey bees in agriculture
- d.** to raise awareness about the effects of beekeeping

3 How do the photo and caption on page 1 support understanding of the text?

The photo shows an image of a beekeeper in protective gear holding a frame covered in wax and honey from a hive box. This photo and caption give readers a clearer idea of the information being shared in paragraphs 2 and 3.

4 What primary purpose does the sidebar on page 3 serve?

- a.** It provides additional information about a topic related to beekeeping.
- b. It gives a specific example of one of the harmful effects of beekeeping.
- c. It lends credibility to the author by giving quotes and statistics.
- d. It warns readers about one of the dangers of hobby beekeeping.

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5 Cite specific evidence from the text to complete the table below with some of the effects of beekeeping.

	POSITIVE OR HELPFUL EFFECTS	NEGATIVE OR HARMFUL EFFECTS
EFFECTS ON HUMANS	Humans “use honey as a sweetener and for nutrition, beeswax for products like lip balm, and even bee venom in some medications.”	“Some people are highly allergic to beestings, so widespread beekeeping could threaten their safety.”
EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT	“(B)ees can help certain plant populations. Most wild flowering plants rely on pollinators, and honey bees are excellent at this task.”	“Honey bees compete with native pollinators for limited supplies of pollen and nectar. This can cause populations of native species to decline or die out.”

6 **PART A:** Which of the following claims is best supported by evidence in the passage?

- a. Bees can sting when they feel threatened.
- b.** Honey bees are excellent pollinators.
- c. Humans rely on products created by bees.
- d. Honey bees help invasive plants to spread.

PART B: What evidence does the author use to support the claim in Part A?

The author uses expert evidence, citing a study from the University of California that says "one out of eight interactions between a non-agricultural plant and a pollinator is carried out by the honey bee."

7 **PART A:** The author describes different insect and plant species as “native” or “non-native.” What do these terms mean?

"Native" plant and animal species are historically part of a local ecosystem. A "non-native" species is one that has been introduced from another place.

PART B: Why is the concept of native and non-native species important when discussing beekeeping?

The difference is important when discussing beekeeping because when non-native honey bees are introduced to an area, they can disrupt the balance in an ecosystem and cause harm to native species.