



presented by **Science a-z** a division of Learning A-Z

Scientists Search for Clues to a Bee Mystery

Bees are very important to farmers and their crops. When bees fly from one plant to another, they carry pollen. The pollen causes the crops to make seeds that will grow into new plants.

Last year, beekeepers started to notice something strange in their beehives. The bees were leaving, and not coming back! Sometimes, the bees

left behind their honey, and the queen bee. This was strange, because in most hives the bees feed the queen and keep her safe. They would not leave her like that.

No one knows why the bees left the hive, or where they went. Scientists call this colony collapse disorder, or CCD for short.

Today, scientists are a little closer to solving the mystery of disappearing honeybees.

To find out what makes bees leave their hives, scientists studied 51 groups of bees. Some of the groups had empty hives, and some did not.

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Writing Prompt:

What might this bee do next?



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Bee Mystery

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In all the groups where the bees had left their hives, the scientists found a virus. This virus causes bees to become sick and die.

The scientists are not sure if the virus makes the sick bees

leave, or if there are other reasons. They will do tests to see how the virus affects the bees. But for now, they know that bees with the virus may leave their hives. The virus can be used as a warning for beekeepers, and help scientists learn more about CCD.

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Compare and Contrast

Bees

- have bodies covered in fine hair
- live in hives, with many other bees
- eat nectar
- collect pollen and nectar for young bees
- can sting once
- pollinate plants
- make honey ▼



A wasp

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Wasps ▲

- have leathery bodies
- live alone or together, in burrows or trees
- eat other insects
- like human food, such as meat and soft drinks
- can sting many times
- don't pollinate plants
- don't make honey (in fact, they eat bees and their honey!)



A bee

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Bees find pollen, fly back to their hive, and dance in a way that tells other bees where the pollen is. Beekeepers harvest the bees' honey.