

Bees in Singapore's Parks

Fill in the blanks below to find out more about Singapore's bees!

One prevalent belief is that all bees are honeybees, when honeybees are in fact just one of many kinds of bees in the world. The vast majority of bee species are actually quite unlike honeybees – they neither make honey nor do they form large _____¹ as honeybees do! These other bees, however, are no less important than honeybees to our natural ecosystems.

Another misunderstanding comes about because picture books often give the impression that all bees are striped yellow and black. In reality, bees, much like birds and butterflies, can be found in an array of _____² colours. Some bees even sport iridescent metallic sheens! Bee _____³ vary widely too, from tiny reed bees that could fit on your pinky nail, to giant carpenter bees bigger than your thumb.

Bees are _____⁴; many would rather flee than sting even if their homes were disturbed. Only honeybees defend their nests aggressively in large swarms and can be considered _____⁵ to people. One must therefore be careful around honeybee nests. All kinds of bees can be safely observed even in close proximity when they are visiting flowers, as they would be preoccupied in gathering _____⁶ and nectar for their young.

In addition to honeybees, our tropical island is also home to several species of 'carpenters', bees that carve nests in _____⁷; 'leafcutters', bees that cut and gather leaves to build their nests; and 'diggers', which excavate nests in the ground. Perhaps the most intriguing of them are the 'cuckoos', bees that lay their eggs in the nests of other bees instead of _____⁸ their own! The young 'cuckoos' feed on pollen provided by their host parents, thus relieving the adult 'cuckoo' bees of the _____⁹ of collecting pollen for their young.

Globally, bees are highly _____¹⁰ as they pollinate food crops. In Singapore, native bees are potentially crucial for the health of local forests, as many flowering plants depend on bees for pollination. It is therefore important to _____¹¹ the diversity of these beautiful natives.

Text adapted from "The Things We Bee-lieve: Bees In Singapore's Parks", www.nparks.gov.sg/nparksbuzz/issue-21-vol-2-2014/conservation/the-things-we-bee-lieve-bees-in-singapore-s-parks

- Answer key**
1. colonies
 2. vibrant
 3. sizes
 4. peaceful
 5. dangerous
 6. pollen
 7. wood
 8. building
 9. responsibility
 10. beneficial
 11. conserve



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