



**YOU CAN** by jok church

With **beakman & jax**

Send your question to: Beakman or Jax,  
P.O. Box 30177, Kansas City, MO 64112

Dear Jax,  
How do bees make honey?  
Stacey Nutt  
Ames, Iowa

Dear Stacey,  
Since today is Saint Valentine's Day and lots of people are calling each other *honey*, I thought it would be a great time to tell everyone that *honey* is flower nectar that bees throw up. Really.

When it's cold, bees eat food they've stored for the winter months. They eat honey and bee bread – which isn't really bread. It's flower pollen mixed with bee spit.

If it's cold where you live, you might enjoy a nice warm cup of honey-cocoa today. In fact, *You Can* make it for your special *honey*.

### experiment #1

#### Bee My Honey - Or Bee A Honey To Someone Else

**WHAT YOU NEED:**

Unsweetened cocoa powder - milk - honey - spices like cinammon, allspice or cloves - permission to cook

**WHAT TO DO:** Heat up 1 1/2 cups milk for every mug of cocoa you want to make. Just as the milk boils, add the spices – as much as you like – and remove from the heat. Stir in 1 tablespoon cocoa and 2 tablespoons of honey for every mug of cocoa you're making. Whip it up really well and share with your Valentine's Day honey.

**MORE BEE STUFF:**

Bees sting to defend their hive. They do not sting to defend themselves. How do we know that? Well, when a bee stings you, the stinger (c) is ripped out of the bee's rear end. It leaves a gaping wound that usually kills the bee. It doesn't make much sense for the bee to die defending itself.

It can make sense if you think about the whole beehive as one living thing – made from many hundred single bees. Several bees may die defending the hive, but the community is still alive.

### Honey: Not A pretty story

Worker bees have to fly about 50,000 miles to gather enough nectar to make just 1 pound of honey.

A bee sucks up nectar from flowers with its long tongue(a).

It swallows flower nectar, which goes to a special stomach (b) just for storing nectar. When the bee gets back to the hive, another bee – presumably a friend – sticks its tongue down the first bee's throat and sucks the nectar out of the honey-stomach.

The new bee lets the nectar ripen into honey in its honey-stomach and then throws up into a wax chamber in the honeycomb. Yum!

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P.S. from Beakman: Killer bees are really just bees that get angry quickly, which is a big problem with a whole hive of them. But just one killer bee cannot hurt you any more than one regular honeybee.