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**Bees like playing with balls, study finds – 3rd November, 2022**

## **Level 0**

We know the saying "as busy as a bee," but we don't know how bees play. Scientists found one way. They did tests on bees and found they liked playing with small balls. The bees played like humans. Young bees played with more balls than old bees. Adult males played with balls for longer than females did.

There were 45 bumblebees in the tests. They had two choices. One was to go straight to a sugary treat. The second was to get to the treat after going around small balls. Most of the bees played with the balls first. A researcher said bees have feelings. She added that the minds of insects are more advanced than we thought.

## **Level 1**

We all know the English saying "as busy as a bee," but we don't know how bees play. Scientists found a way that bees might relax after a busy day making honey. The scientists did different tests on bees playing with different things. The bees liked playing with small balls. The bees played a little like humans. Younger bees played with more balls than older bees. Adult males played with balls for longer than females did. Bees are the first known insects to "play".

The scientists did tests on 45 bumblebees. The bees had two options. One was to go straight to a sugary treat. The second was to get to the treat after going around coloured wooden balls. Most of the bees played with the balls first. A researcher said: "Bees are a million miles from the...unfeeling creatures they are traditionally believed to be." She added that there are strong signs to show that insect minds are a lot more advanced than we thought.

## **Level 2**

Bees are very busy. We all know the English saying "as busy as a bee". However, we know little about how bees play. Scientists have found one way that bees might relax after a busy day making honey - they play with balls. The scientists did different tests on bees playing with different things. The insects liked playing with wooden balls. The researchers said bees played a little like humans. Younger bees played with more balls than older bees, while adult males played with balls for longer than adult females did. The bees are the first known insects to "play".

The scientists did tests on 45 bumblebees. The bees had two options. The first was to fly or walk directly to a sugary treat. The second choice was to get to the treat after going around coloured wooden balls. Most of the bees decided to play with the balls for their treat. A scientist said the tests showed that bees are more thoughtful than we knew. She said: "Bees are a million miles from the...unfeeling creatures they are traditionally believed to be." She added that there is "a strong indication that insect minds are far more sophisticated than we might imagine".

## **Level 3**

Everyone knows that bees are busy. There is even a saying in English that one can be "as busy as a bee". However, little is known about how bees play. Scientists have discovered one way that bees could relax after a busy day making honey - they play with balls. The scientists are from Queen Mary University of London. They did different tests on bees "playing" with different things. The insects particularly liked playing with small, wooden balls. The researchers said the way bees played was a little like how humans play. Younger bees rolled more balls than older bees, while adult males spent longer playing with balls than adult females. The ball-rolling bees are the first known insects to "play".

The researchers experimented on 45 bumblebees in a specially designed test area. The bees were given two options. The first choice was to fly or walk directly to get a sugary treat. The second choice was to get to the treat by going around different coloured wooden balls. Most of the bees decided to play with the balls and then get their treat. A researcher said the experiments showed that bees are more thoughtful than people believed. She said: "Bees are a million miles from the mindless, unfeeling creatures they are traditionally believed to be." She added that: "This research provides a strong indication that insect minds are far more sophisticated than we might imagine."