



# Le Butineur

Pollinium, créateur de biodiversité



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\_ Beehive history \_

Newsletter of bees of INSEEC U. Chambéry

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Committed to protect biodiversity, INSEEC U. Chambéry invests in sponsorship of bees. Come and get an inside peek of the incredible life of foraging bees. If you are a nature lover, you will certainly enjoy it.



## She will either like you or not!

\_ Beehive history \_

## She stings, ouch, ouch, ouch!

Will she sting you or not? Every beehive visit is a lottery, and few beekeepers will escape the sting of their favourite insect. Bees will typically become more "aggressive" when beekeepers come to collect their honey. In reality, they defend their loot which should, in theory, be used for feeding the colony during the winter.

A defensive reflex that is exacerbated at this time of year when flowers are scarce. Bees are also more easily irritable in stormy or cool weather. They will only sting if they are disturbed or if they feel threatened.

However, by stinging you, she will lose her life: after the sting, that whole organ will be torn from her abdomen. Her propensity to use her sting also depends on her breed. Some breeds are known to be more gentle than others, such as Caucasians, Carniolans, Buckfasts or Italians ...

As with all animal species, cross-breeding may influence her character. Hence



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the need to search for the purest breeds possible from a genetic point of view. As a matter of fact, many associations are working on such topics, one of them is try-

ing to understand the black bee, deemed to be more aggressive.



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What can upset a bee to the point that she turns, her stinger forward, into a suicide bomber ready to die?

The list is relatively long ... It could be a visit from the beekeeper in stormy weather or a visit that lasts too long; improper handling of the beehive, such as dropping a frame to the ground or onto an open beehive; honey sampling operations at the end of the season; looting of the hive by neighbouring bees; the absence of a queen in the colony; cool weather ...

Certain noises also tend to irritate bees. Digging or raking your garden or using the trimmer near the beehive is not always a good idea! You'd better know...





– Bees and men –

## Security and serenity

In the privacy of the colony, each bee is protected by the guard bees. Found at the entrance to the hive, the guard bees exercise strict access control and, in addition, they are armed with a stinger!

Only the bees that carry the beehive scent will be allowed inside. By diffusing specific pheromones, which are continuously exchanged within the colony, the queen provides a kind of scent marking which facilitates the task of the guard bees.

The bees foreign to the hive are invited to leave. Of course, predators of all kinds, such as butterflies, wasps, small reptiles or mammals are hunted unceremoniously. Thus, each bee can go about her business without worrying

about intrusion or threat. Such functioning promotes the serenity within the hive and allows every bee to deploy her talents without stress or worry.

In a company, managers must also ensure the material and psychological safety of the staff to allow everyone to give the best of themselves.

Security and serenity are the prerequisites for the performance of an organization.

### Henri Duchemin,

a beekeeper, a sociologist and a founder of Mélilot Consulting  
For more info, please click on <http://melilotconsulting.com>



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– Beehive history –

## An anti-bite arsenal

Only a few beekeepers will visit their hives without any protection. However, the vast majority of others will put on special clothes before going to say hello to their protégés. It is often unnecessary, but sometimes essential.

The classic outfit consists of a jacket (or jumpsuit) with long sleeves, which is tightened at the wrist and at the waist with an elastic band for better protection. Topped with a black veil covering the entire head, the jacket protects the entire upper body. This mesh "hood", set away from the face by a rigid hat system or metallic ribs, attaches to the jacket with a zip-

per. An important detail: the mosquito net is black to facilitate vision. Underneath, the beekeeper wears a pair of heavy canvas trousers and preferably thick shoes.

Finally, he shouldn't forget to protect his hands - the favourite targets of bees! Soft leather gloves, extended by long canvas sleeves, provide effective protection.

However, the key lies in improving our knowledge about how bees behave, because there is no exact science about it.



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# Brief

Proverbs and sayings

*« Words are like bees, some create honey, while others leave a sting »*

a Swiss proverb

## MORE HONEY IN EUROPE

According to a study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), honey production has been growing in Europe since 1960. It reached more than 200,000 tonnes in 2018, with some 12 million beehives, against around 70,000 tonnes in 1960 with 10 million beehives. However, there was an irregular production with weaker years, 2012 or 2016.



## Authorized neonicotinoids

France has just presented a bill to re-authorize the use of a neonicotinoid for the cultivation of sugar beet. Valid until 2023, this authorization will notably be accompanied by a "pollinator protection" plan.