



The Bee-Kind Garden

Apian Wisdom for your garden

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An Introduction - July 2011

For thousands of years the lives and activities of honey bees have been interwoven with our own. Early legends claim bees originated in Paradise, where they were known as Little Servants of God, and for this reason it is said to be unlucky to kill them. They are one of our main benefactors for life on this planet as without their pollinating skills the growth and development of food crops would diminish and, eventually, fail.

The honey bee is a social insect and for thousands of years, before being domesticated and kept in hives, lived wild in holes in trees, recesses in walls, in caves and any other natural area protected from rain and cold weather. Man's ingenuity to 'tame' bees involved providing them with early hives formed of hollowed logs, rolled bark wrapped in straw, woven flexible willow stems, and coiled straw. And all this endeavour to enable honey to be harvested, a near magical elixir which until the early eighteenth century was for many people the main sweetener and preserver of food. It was also the essential element in mead, also known as honey wine, with records of it dating back about 9,000 years.

Honey was such an essential part of our lives that bees were almost treated as family members and told of deaths and forthcoming marriages. A piece of bridal cake and a glass of wine were often left outside a hive to keep the bees contented. And if the bees swarmed on a wedding day this was taken to be an indication of forthcoming fertility, wealth and happiness.

Bee omens were many and if a bee flew around a sleeping child it was said to ensure a happy life. Also, a charm or brooch shaped like a honey bee was claimed to bring luck and success in business and to reflect thrift and perseverance.

The Bee-Kind Garden buzzes with facts about bees, including weather forecasting rhymes, making gifts of swarms, flavouring ale and drinking mead as a honeymoon refresher to ensure the birth of a boy child. This book will take you through the world of bees and their social lives, which are integral with our own.

Whether kept in a pocket, knapsack or awaiting bed-time reading, this information-packed book will captivate you with its revelations about the lives of bees.

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