

NEWS RELEASE  
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## HOW DO BEES FIND THEIR NEST?

### BACKYARD HORTICULTURE

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Honeybee navigation is actually a very interesting topic. Various aspects of finding food sources, returning to the right hive, and communication with other bees have been studied for decades. Scientific technology has allowed even greater understanding of the honeybee.

Using a newly developed special radar system, researchers tagged bees and observed their flight patterns out of the hive. The bees first took short orientation flights. They then took longer round-trips as they learned the surrounding landscape. So, the answer to the title question – bees learn to find their nest the same way children learn to get back home.

Once bees find a food or water source, they are also able to communicate that location to fellow foragers. Upon return, they carry out an elaborate “waggle dance,” indicating distance, duration, and even quality of the food. In addition, they mark the source with a chemical pheromone recognizable by other bees of the same colony.

Honeybees also have interesting color vision. They can see ultraviolet light, which is invisible to humans. At the other end of the scale, however, we can see red color. Bees see red as black..

A few bee facts:

- Bees fly about 15 miles per hour
- A worker bee’s average life span is six weeks
- Worker bees are all female

- In the course of her lifetime, a worker bee will produce 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey
- Bees fly an average of one to two miles from the hive searching for food
- To make a pound of honey, workers in a hive fly 55,000 miles and tap 2 million flowers
- Honeybees pollinate 95 crops worth \$10 billion in the United States alone.

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