



It was the natural sweetness of honey that they prized in ancient times. It was also what else you could do with it. For one thing, you could make mead or honey wine. Mead is possibly the world's oldest alcoholic drink. We know it was drunk as long ago as 9,000 years ago and is almost certainly very much older than that. If you have an apple, you might light your way to bed with a beeswax candle.

It also turns out that honey has many medical benefits. Of course, we know it is very nutritional. Further, honey is naturally antibacterial and anti-inflammatory. This means it can be successfully used to treat burns and other skin wounds. And there is so much more. It is full of antioxidants,

nectar and pollen they need. The males are the drones. Pretty much their only job is to mate with the Queen they do no other work except to flap their wings to cool down the hive if it is getting too hot. Each of these types of bee needs the others to exist. They have to operate as a single team. People sometimes think that the queen is in charge, but she is not. If she is not laying eggs well, the worker bees will kill her and replace her. Every single bee exists only in terms of the hive as a whole. It might be better to think of a hive, an anthill or a superorganism, perhaps even a hivemind.

Apart from their gift of honey, bees are critical pollinators of plants. Without them, everything would fall apart. They pollinate 70 of the around 100 crop species that feed 90% of the world. If bees were to become extinct, we could lose all the plants that bees pollinate, all of the animals that eat those plants, and so on up the food chain. Bees are the rock upon which our world is built. They need our help, as populations are falling. Hives are falling victim to the varroa mite and are harmed by the use of pesticides.