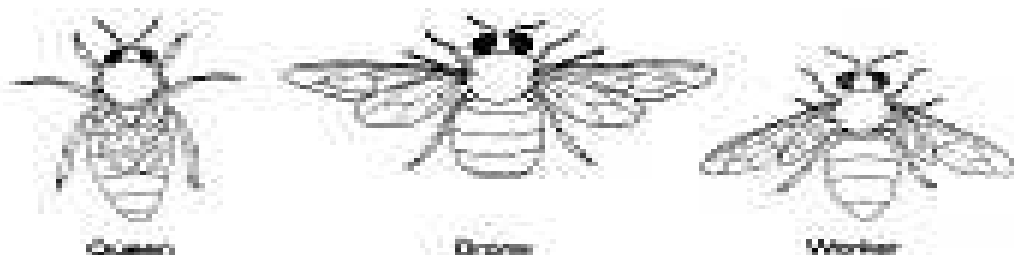


Honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) life cycle

The three types of bee

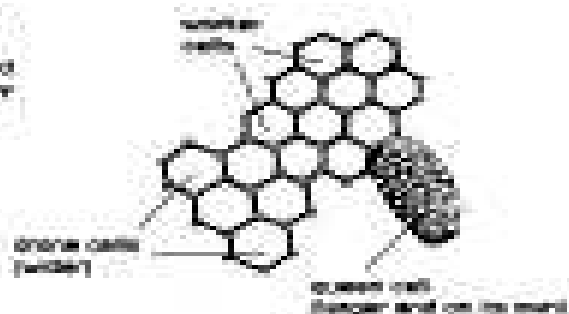
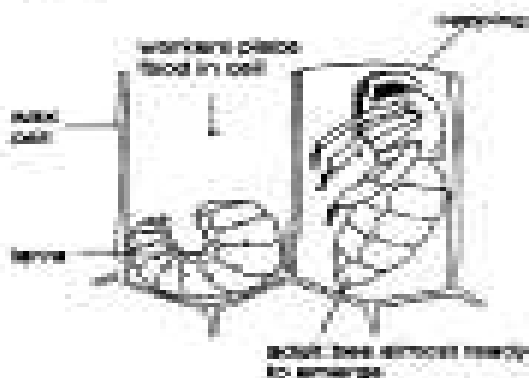


The queen is a fertile female. There is only one queen in a hive and only she can lay eggs.

Drones are males. There may be several hundred in a hive. Their function is to fertilise the queen.

Workers are sterile females. There may be 20,000 to 60,000 in a hive. They do all the work of building the comb, collecting and storing nectar and pollen, feeding the larvae and cleaning the hive.

The workers build three types of wax cell, differing in size or shape. The queen lays eggs in each of the cells and the eggs hatch into larvae. The workers feed the larvae until they are ready to pupate, and then they put a wax capping over the cell. After 16-17 days the capping is eaten off and the adult bee emerges.



The eggs laid in the drone cells are unfertilised and develop into males. The eggs laid in the worker cells and queen cells are fertilised but the queen larvae are fed a different diet from that of the larvae in the worker cells. The difference in diet causes the workers to be sterile and the queen to be fertile.