

Introduction:

- ***Apiculture (Bee keeping) is the maintenance of honey bee colonies, by humans in order to collect products like honey, beeswax, propolis etc.***
- A location where bee colonies are kept is called an apiary or "***bee yard***".
- Honey bees are highly organized social insects and their systematic position is as follows -

- Kingdom - Animalia
- Phylum - Arthropoda
- Class - Insecta
- Order - Hymenoptera
- Family - Apidae
- Genus - *Apis*



❖ Species of Honey bees:

1. *Apis dorsata* (*The rock- bee*)

- This is the largest honeybee.
- Builds single large open comb on high branches of trees and rocks.
- Produces large quantity of honey, but this bee is difficult to domesticate.



2. *Apis cerana indica* (*The Indian bee*)

- Medium – sized.
- Hive consists of several parallel combs in cavities of tree trunks, earthen pots, etc.
- This bee is not so ferocious and can be domesticated.



3. *Apis florea* (*The little bee*)

- Small – sized.
- Builds single small combs in bushes, hedges, etc.
- Honey yield is poor.



4. *Apis mellifera* (*The European bee*)

- Somewhat look likes the Indian bee (*Apis indica*).
- This has been introduced in many parts of the world including India.
- It is easily domesticated.



The Bee colony

- A honey bee colony has three castes –Queen, worker and drone.



(i) Queen Bee

- Queen bee is the only fertile female in colony
- She is largest in size.
- No wax glands.
- Live for about 3 - 4 years.
- May lay eggs at the rate of 1500-2000 per day