

Can You See If I'm a Bee?

Melissa Garrick Edwards

Jonathan Woodward, Illustrator

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Learning about pollinators is fun in the picture book Can You See If I'm a Bee?

Melissa Garrick Edwards's colorful and informative picture book *Can You See If I'm a Bee?* distinguishes between bees and other pollinating insects, showing why they are all important to humans.

With its playful rhyming text, detailed, lifelike illustrations, and wealth of facts about amazing insects, this book makes learning about bees fun. It intones that bees can fly forward, backward, sideways, and hover in the air; can communicate, and even give directions to the best flowers by shaking their bodies; and that a single queen bee lays thousands of eggs.

Several different species of bees are introduced, with the audience challenged to recognize the differences between them and other insects that may look, act, and even pollinate like bees, but that are not bees at all. And the book's descriptions of weird insect characteristics and behaviors pique interest: spotted bees, it says, steal the nests of other bees, and little green bees love to drink human sweat. There are also graphic and frightening descriptions of insect behavior: the robber fly, which resembles a bumblebee, grasps its prey with its strong legs, injects poisonous enzymes into its head, and then makes a meal of it, for example.

The book's devotion to its rhyme scheme results in some awkward sentences and bumpy rhythms. But pollination is described in accessible language, alongside large, clear illustrations that show how pollen clings to a bee's hairy legs and other body parts, and how the pollen is then carried from flower to flower as the bee flies about drinking nectar. Advice for observers on how to avoid getting stung comes in, as do identifying details about non-threatening insects; advice for joining the effort to protect bees makes the book actionable, too.

Learning about pollinators is fun in the picture book *Can You See If I'm a Bee?*, which introduces the amazing worlds of bees and pollinating insects, encouraging their protection.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January 3, 2022)

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