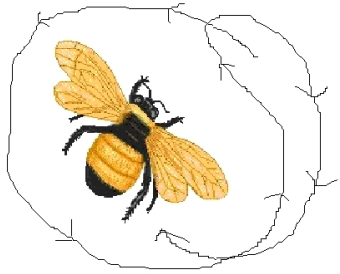


THE “HONEYBEE DANCE”
by Emily Bishton
magnusonchildrensgarden.org



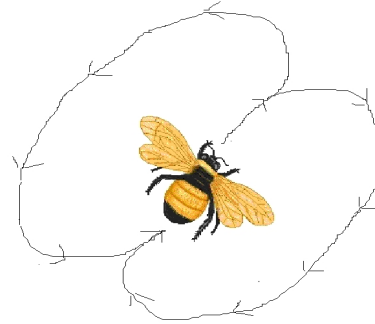
A great activity for understanding one of the “secret” languages that other living things use to communicate with each other.

HAVE FUN LEARNING AND PRACTICING!



Round Dance

When a food source is very close to the hive, a forager bee performs the round dance. She does so by flying around in narrow circles, suddenly reversing direction to her original course. She may repeat the dance several times at the same location or move to another location to repeat it. After the round dance has ended, she often distributes food to the bees following her. The round dance communicates distance but not direction.



Waggle Dance

When a food source is farther away from the hive, a forager bee performs the waggle dance. She flies straight ahead towards the food source, returns in a semicircle to the starting point, flies again through the straight course, then makes a semicircle in the opposite direction to complete a figure-eight. While flying the straight-line course of the dance, the bee wags its body vigorously from side to side and emits a buzzing sound that is produced by its wing-beats. The waggle dance communicates both distance and direction.

References:

Karl von Frisch, *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees*
David R. Tarpy, NC State Univ., *The Honeybee Dance Language*

Bee Dancing ideas:

1. Explain and demonstrate each type of bee dance. Don't be afraid to be silly!
2. Have one person at a time choose to either the round dance or waggle dance to demonstrate, while others try to guess which dance it is. Then take turns until everyone has had a dance chance.
3. An advanced version is to have children try to guess which flower the “bee” is pointing to!