



FUN FACT

Guard bees stand at the hive entrance on their back four legs with their front legs raised.

Can you imitate the guard bee posture in the picture below?"



GUARDING THE HIVE



When a bee gets older and has a strong stinger, they become a guard bee. Guard bees stand at the entrance to every hive and make sure anyone coming into the hive really belongs there. They guard against invaders like bumble bees, wasps and yellow jackets. They use their sense of "smell" to determine who belongs and who doesn't. They recognize the bees that are part of the hive because the whole hive has the same smell.

Have fun choosing between three to five things in your home that are safe for smelling and have strong scents. Examples could be toothpaste, soap, lemon or orange slice or other fruit, chocolate, cinnamon stick, sprig of rosemary, or crayons. Choose anything that is safe to carry and sniff.

Choose one person to be the guard bee. The guard bee then chooses one scent to be the scent of the hive. Give the guard bee a soft pillow to hold. We are using the pillow to represent the guard bee's fierce fighting ability when strangers attempt to invade the hive.

Use a doorway or two chairs to represent the entrance to the hive. Have the guard bee sniff the scent of the hive deeply before the game begins. Blind fold the guard bee and have them stand in the entrance to the hive facing out. One at a time, each of the other players approaches the entrance to the hive with a scent in their hand. When they choose the scent they are deciding whether they are a member of the hive or an invader. The guard bee stands very still. The other player holds the scent gently under their nose without touching them and lets them sniff it to the count of three. The approaching player jumps back and waits to see if the guard bee will admit them or attack by throwing the pillow. If the guard bee recognizes the scent as the scent of the hive, they allow the player to enter. If not the guard bee fights off the invader by throwing the pillow sending them back to try again. After all the bees have had a try or two, switch guard bees.

If you have one child (or two adults are playing together), the one who is not the guard bee keeps returning with different smells until the guard bee admits them or they have gone through all the smells a few times. Take turns being the guard bee.