

When Disaster Struck



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Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by Peekdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

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Farmer Joe walked towards the beehive in his red-checked shirt and stockman's working boots. He tilted his hat to shade his face from the harsh sun.



He pulled the brood rack out of the hive and noticed there was not as much honey as there usually was. He thought it was a little strange, but he didn't pay it much attention.

Early the next morning, Bonnie and Ben the bees set off to collect some nectar.

As Bonnie was preparing to land, she unintentionally veered to the left, because of her smaller left wing. She crashed headlong into the stem of a plant. Ben helped her up, as usual.



They decided to climb up out onto the petal of a flower, ready to collect the sweet nectar from its centre.

They do this by putting their tube-like mouths, called a proboscis, into the anther of the plant where the pollen and nectar is stored. They suck it up and store it in their honey stomach, called a crop.



To their surprise, they found very little pollen or nectar. So they flew from flower-to-flower in search of pollen and nectar, but there wasn't any anywhere!

As they flew, they looked closer and could see the flowers had all started turning dull, dry and shriveled up, just like a dead sheep carcass in the Sun.



Bonnie and Ben decided to check some more flowers on other plants, but it was the same story.

They began to realise why there was not enough nectar and pollen. A horrid drought was affecting the region and the plants were dying.

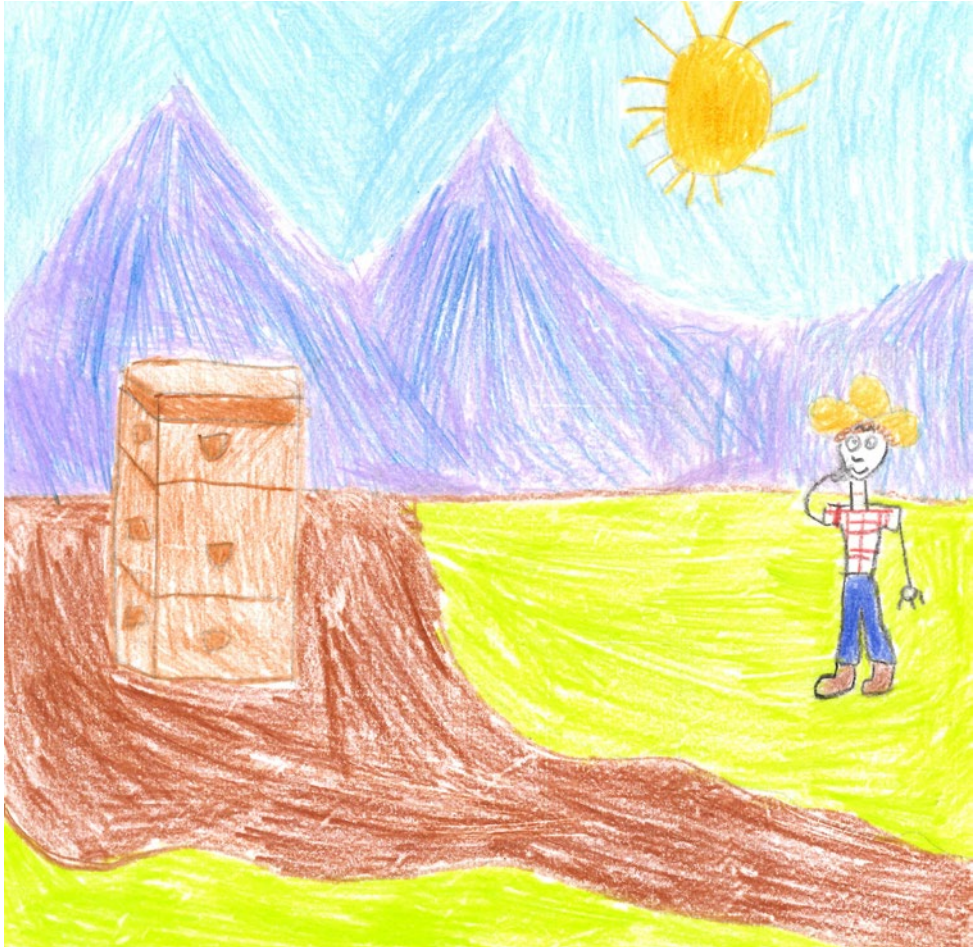




Farmer Joe decided it was about time to collect the honey again.

He strolled down the path and noticed he could not hear the usual busy buzzing of the bees. He could not see the usual cloud of bees around the hive as they were busily making honey either.

The bees seemed to be doing nothing!



There was absolutely no honey anywhere. Farmer Joe investigated the area where the bees like to forage.

“I have an idea why the bees aren’t making enough honey,” thought Farmer Joe. “We haven’t had enough rain for years and the drought has taken over. There are not enough flowers and those that have come out are dull, dry and shriveled up.”

One morning, Bonnie and Ben saw something strange leading to the hive.

“What is it?” Bonnie asked nervously.

“I don’t know,” Ben replied.

“You’re supposed to know everything,” Bonnie said in despair as she looked at the long blue thing on the ground.



“Hey guys, don’t worry,” Farmer Joe said as he opened up the hive brood rack. “I’m using the hose to pump in some sugar water mixture I made up, to give you enough food. It is all I can do since the drought has nearly killed all of the plants.”





Life got pretty boring for Bonnie and Ben because they couldn't go out and enjoy collecting nectar from different flowers.

Although they collect from flowers, they were very thankful for the sugar water mixture that Farmer Joe fed them every morning.

Days turned into weeks and then months, as the drought ravaged the countryside. But the hive was able to remain healthy and survive due to Farmer Joe's sugar water treat.

Late one night Bonnie and Ben heard a roaring sound they had not heard in a long time. They slowly crept out of the hive and saw it was pouring rain! They were so excited.





The drought had broken and the rain teemed down. A great flood occurred, but the water went as quickly as it had come.

Bonnie and Ben led thousands of bees out of the hive to start cleaning up damage caused by the flood around the hive.



Bonnie and Ben usually hated cleaning up, but this time they didn't care. It hadn't rained for so long and the flood had given them hope that flowers would once again bloom. They would be tasting the fresh nectar and pollen again very soon.



Farmer Joe had kept the hive alive through the toughest of droughts. He knew that the bees relied on healthy plants and in turn he relied on the bees for his honey. So he made a plan to put in some measures to help protect his farm's plants in times of drought.

Once the flowers bloomed, Bonnie, Ben and their hive rewarded Farmer Joe by working hard to produce the best honey they ever had.



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