Beekeeping Demonstration

**Age group:** All ages. Adult chaperones required.

**Timeframe:** 20 min

**Nutshell:** Students observe a beekeeper in action, and have the chance to observe live bees, as well as eggs, larvae, and honey.

**Supplies:**
- Flags or line marking off areas where students should stand while observing or working with hive.
- Smoker with lighter and fuel
- Hive tool
- Beekeeper with proper protective gear

**Set-up:**
- Beekeeper should do a brief hive inspection shortly before the demo begins to make sure bees are not behaving aggressively. (If yes, do not continue with demonstration.) Also find example frames to use for demo:
  - 1 frame with honey/nectar/pollen
  - 1 frame with eggs/larvae/pupae (ideal if you can find one frame with all three stages!) Put back in the hive but remember where you put them.
- Gather students in an area that is far enough away that the hive is not a distraction, to receive behavior instructions.

**Activity Description**
- Go over the basic beehive behavior rules. (See Safety Around the Hive lesson.)
- Instruct students to follow their adult leader in a single file line to the observing area, so everyone can see.
- Beekeeper should briefly explain each step he/she is doing:
  - Removing outer and inner cover (show bees on inside of cover)
  - Why use the hive tool? (Show propolis)
  - Why use the smoker? (Explain role of smoker)
  - Honey supers – take one frame away from the super and show up close to participants. If students don’t want to be near bees, have them give a thumbs down. Talk about how bees make honey, and what they use it for.
  - Brood chamber – same as above, but talk about bee life cycle. Show participants how to identify eggs, larvae, and pupae. Good chance to talk about queen bee.
  - Ask for questions, or if anyone wants a second look at the frame.
- Participants leave hive area. Optional: offer students a taste test of honey from the hive.

*This lesson was developed at the Goodman Youth Farm, a program of Community GroundWorks in Madison, Wisconsin. For more information, visit [www.communitygroundworks.org](http://www.communitygroundworks.org).*
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- Beekeeper puts hive back together and rejoins group. Additional time for questions, showing empty bee boxes/comb, or time for students to try on a bee suit. (Optional.)

Tips and Tricks for Demonstrations:
- Extra adults are crucial. Have them reassure nervous students, calm down/redirect overly-excited students, or accompany students who wish to leave.
- Speak assertively so everyone can hear you – you will be further away from participants than during a normal garden lesson.
- If you have enough staff to have an assistant beekeeper who can help point out eggs/larvae to students, this can be very helpful.
- If you are doing multiple demos, don’t leave the hive open in between. This causes the bees to get agitated.