Pollen Picky Bees: Analyzing the Differences in Bee Harvesting Behavior

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I was investigating and tracking the kinds of pollen that different colonies were collecting. Specifically local hives vs. domesticated hives. I compared four different hives, two which were local and the other two bred, and observed the pollen harvested to see if there was a difference in the behavior, habits, and preference of the hives. I initially predicted that the domesticated bees would be more predictable in their harvesting habits and the local bees would follow the seasons better. Through a series of three weeks I collected pollen and identified two major groups: Vernonia and Goldenrod. I observed the hive's habits as the season changed. The data showed that there was a clear difference in preference towards pollen. Bees that were rescued from the wild knew the local plants and began to forage certain pollen before the season. Although there was a clear difference in preference, I believe that the prior knowledge from the wild bees played a big part. This preference in pollen or variety and knowledge helps beekeepers learn how to take care of their hives better and personally. Knowing whether a colony is domesticated or not can help beekeepers, specialize treatment for parasites, location, transfers, and feeding. It also helps to increase the amount of local pollinators in the area by supporting the idea of planting local foliage.

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