

Bee Vs. Me

Yesterday I became unwittingly involved in a duel, but at least I was the winner!

I was standing outside throwing out our old bread for the birds with my 3-year-old when I bent over to pick up some doggy-doo. I noticed a few bees hovering about, but there have been a lot of them lately, and I'm never too worried about bees since they don't usually sting away from their hive unless provoked... unless you happen across a bee who is a little off his rocker or something. So anyway, I went inside to wash my hands, and that's when I got stung on the back of my neck. Out of instinct, I slapped the little pest, and then I ran outside to get my daughter to safety away from the other bees. When we got inside, the bee was on the floor and still alive, so I triumphantly took it hostage. I looked up how to treat a bee sting (it **hurt!!!**), as well as what they eat – I had not captured the thing to torture it, but I certainly didn't want to let it go... I wasn't sure what I was going to do with it, but I didn't want it starving in the meantime. After finding out that it was indeed a honeybee, and that he would probably like some nectar before he passed away as a result of his stinger being torn from his behind (and implanted into my neck). I guess I just kind of wanted to see if what I thought was an old myth was true – do honeybees die after stinging? From everything I read as well as my real-life example (he passed away last night), it seems to be truth rather than fiction. So goodbye to the bee that stung me yesterday, and farewell – I'm sorry it had to end this way. The good news is, other than a marble-sized lump on the back of my neck, I don't have many ill effects from the sting; the pain is gone and the itching is tolerable. I traded my story with everyone I ran into yesterday because who over the age of 30 still gets stung by bees? Surprisingly, it's more common than I thought, and not just something that happens to

reckless kids whose curiosity and carelessness often pave the way to childhood wounds and ailments. After trading bee stories yesterday, I learned that a friend and her husband were stung by what they said were sweat bees while riding their motorcycle, but after further research and thanks to the Schmidt Sting Pain Index I found on Wikipedia, I've concluded that neither their nor my bee stings could be the work of sweat bees. Honey bees are more likely the culprit, as the pain from their sting ranks much higher on the scale. Since my husband found the pain index so interesting (and began looking up bullet ant stings on youtube, yeow!), I've posted it for your reference as well. Yet another thing I love about living where I live – we don't have all the varieties of nasty stinging insects as are found in tropical climates, and the ones we do have at least give us a break over the winters. I'm glad for that because after the pain I went through yesterday, it's going to be difficult to let my little ones play outside until the bees are gone – thank goodness this happened to me and not them! Oh, and if you don't cringe or at least wriggle your toes when reading the following descriptions of types of pain, there is something wrong with you!

RIP, Bee!

Schmidt Sting Pain Index

- * 1.0 Sweat bee: Light, ephemeral, almost fruity. A tiny spark has singed a single hair on your arm.
- * 1.2 Fire ant: Sharp, sudden, mildly alarming. Like walking across a shag carpet & reaching for the light switch.
- * 1.8 Bullhorn acacia ant: A rare, piercing, elevated sort of pain. Someone has fired a staple into your cheek.
- * 2.0 Bald-faced hornet: Rich, hearty, slightly crunchy. Similar to getting your hand mashed in a revolving door.
- * 2.0 Yellowjacket: Hot and smoky, almost irreverent. Imagine W. C. Fields extinguishing a cigar on your tongue.
- * 2.x Honey bee and European hornet: Like a matchhead that

flips off and burns on your skin.

* 3.0 Red harvester ant: Bold and unrelenting. Somebody is using a drill to etaylhisvate your ingrown toenail.

* 3.0 Paper wasp: Caustic & burning. Distinctly bitter aftertaste. Like spilling a beaker of hydrochloric acid on a paper cut.

* 4.0 Pepsis wasp: Blinding, fierce, shockingly electric. A running hair drier has been dropped into your bubble bath.

* 4.0+ Bullet ant: Pure, intense, brilliant pain. Like fire-walking over flaming charcoal with a 3-inch rusty nail in your heel.