

A superorganism in trouble

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Honeybees pollinate our crops and produce the honey we enjoy. We all know that. What we are perhaps not aware of, however, is just how or why they do this and why we are so dependent on what they do.

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Over 200 remarkable action photographs, all in color, present the entire range of astounding bee activities. Tautz describes in an entertaining and easily understandable way the complex interactions that take place between individual bees in every bee colony, allowing it to work as a whole. He reveals bee colonies to us as "superorganisms" whose almost eerie collective intelligence and behavior emerges from the thousands of small decisions made by the individual workers, not one of which has any notion of the "big picture".

Should any part of the system break down, the colony will, instead of reproducing itself by swarming, die. This integrated view of bee colonies is often not understood, especially by those who treat bee colonies like poor migrant workers, transporting them to climates to which they have not adapted, and keeping them under cramped conditions in which disease spreads rapidly. Is it any wonder that colonies die?

Source: Springer

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