



“Bees provide Honey which is for rituals, dowry, a currency t trade, and medicine enhancing relations among members of the community nature and the ancestors.”

Prepared by Mr John Samorai Lengosa
Program Officer
Ogiek Peoples' Development Program(OPDP)

Types of bees according to Ogiek
African honey bee and the stingless bee, *Segemiat ag Gosomeg*
However, bees are also associated with the type of honey they produce although this dependent on the flower nectar the bees visit e.g. *Gaposwet* known to produce sweet honey which induces vomiting upon eating, *Gosomeg* a stingless bee nesting in the ground *Kipirgei* dark in colour and not aggressive *Ng'wan* produces bitter honey *Somosireg* brown in colour and aggressive found in sooywo



Image 1:
African bee, *segemiat*, visiting flowers of plants in Mau forest. This bee found in the highlands is described to be relatively big and quite dark compared to those found in lowlands that are small, brown, and aggressive.



Image 2:

Members of the Ogiek placing modern bee hives alongside their farms in the forest. They believe that pollen from flowering crops together with flowering trees in the forest will yield a lot of honey for them



Image 3:

Ogiek honey gatherers preparing a smoker for the bees



Image 4:

An Ogiek traditional wedding. The bride holding a branch of a tree. The wedding ceremony is blessed with honey brew. bee hives are given as presents and honey forms the bride price.

Actions to Protect Bees

1 Awareness on conservation of bees through ecosystem regeneration. This involves replanting of flowering indigenous trees in areas formerly forest but degraded. Several hundreds of acres in Mau forest have been rehabilitated through community scouts initiatives. This is expected to provide bees and other pollinators with safe habitat, food and finally increase honey production.

2 Supporting bee keeping initiative not only as a way of preserving the Ogiek culture but also as a source of income. We encourage that bee hives can as well be placed on farms as opposed to being reserved to being placed in forest alone. Ogiek have also started processing and marketing their honey.

3 Participating in the bee keeping capacity building and awareness e.g. bee keeping and pollination exhibition by the National Museum of Kenya. The exhibition features bee keeping communities such as the Kambas and the Ogiek with the message to conserving bees and improving the quality of bees/encouraging production of organic honey.