

HISTORY OF SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Charles Darwin and Bees. GENE KRITSKY, Department of Biology, Tri-State University, Angola, Indiana 46703. — Charles Darwin's interest in insects extends back to his boyhood days, when he collected beetles as a hobby. Although he did not write a book solely dedicated to the insects, Darwin did use numerous examples of insect behavior, genetics, evolution, and morphology in his theories of evolution and pangenesis.

With the publication of an index to Charles Darwin's insect references (Kritsky 1981), it is possible to examine all of Darwin's writings including his letters, to determine his interest in bees. Darwin was interested in honey bees and bumble bees. His interest was primarily in the area of cell or comb construction, and genetic variation.

Darwin used comb construction as an example to show that instinct evolved. By looking at examples in the bee family, Darwin was able to show a gradation in behavior in comb construction, from simple cells, to the complex colonies of the honey bees.

Literature Cited

1. KRITSKY, G. 1981. Charles Darwin's contribution to entomology and an index to his insect references. *Melsheimer Entomol. Ser. No. 30*: 1-14.

