

New Westminster Beekeeper's Association

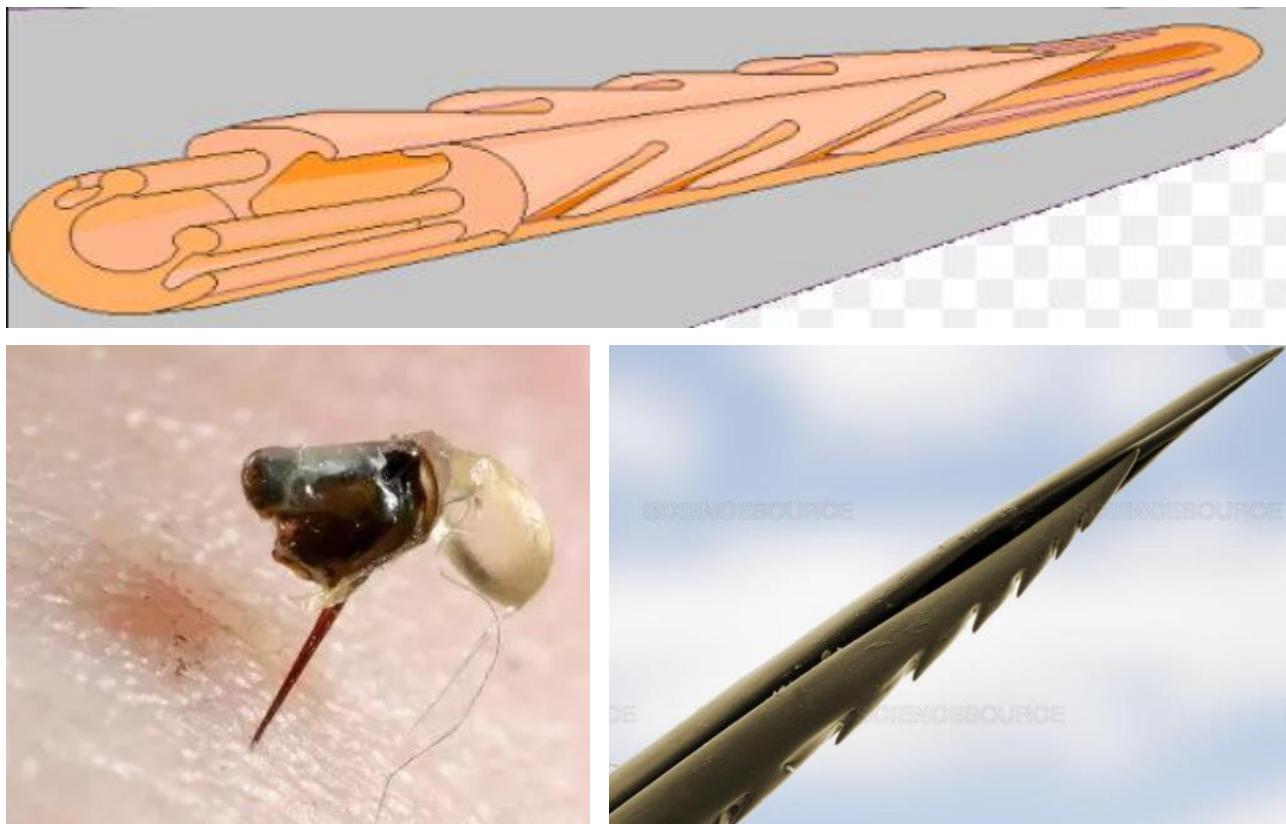
19 Things to Know about Beekeeping

Module 2 – Bee Stings

This module was prepared for members of the New Westminster Beekeeper's Association and are intended to be augmented by a hands-on experience in the bee yard.

No matter how careful a beekeeper is, eventually a bee sting will happen, and the beekeeper should be prepared by knowing in advance what to expect.

The stinger appendage consists of two barbed lancets and a stylet (tube).



The stinger assembly is attached to a venom sac that has a muscle that pumps venom for about 5 minutes after it has detached from the bee's body. The longer the stinger remains in the beekeeper's body, the more venom the beekeeper gets.

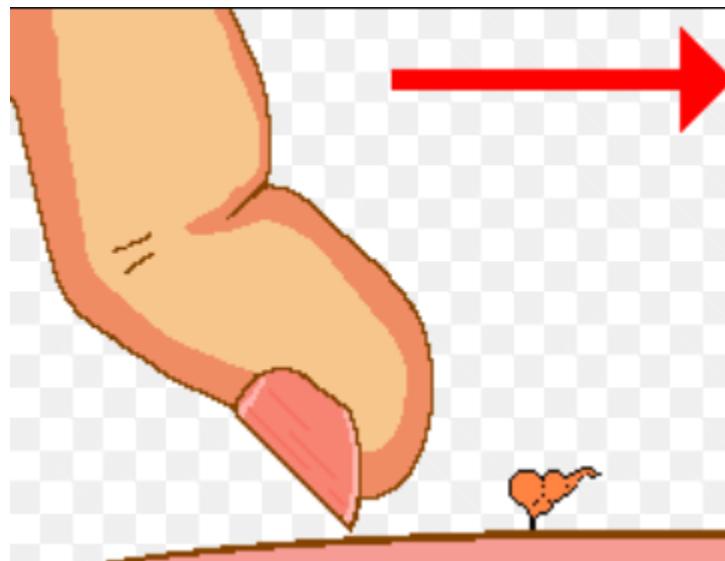
It would be prudent for each new beekeeper to have a test sting to determine the level of reaction. A test sting is a live bee sting, administered to the beekeeper for five full seconds, then removed without injecting more venom. The beekeeper is monitored for 20 minutes and if there is no sign of phylaxis, then the beekeeper can be relatively confident that a bee sting will be tolerable.

Signs of phylaxis in a test sting situation include moving red blotches on the skin, itchy scalp, and/or itchy palms. If during a test sting, the beekeeper displays signs of phylaxis, then the beekeeper needs to have an EpiPen on hand and should immediately begin a bee sting immunity treatment regimen. Seek the advice of a highly experienced beekeeper or physician before starting immunity treatments.

What to do for a Bee Sting Incident

1. **Remove the stinger** - immediately by scraping the stinger off the sting using a finger nail or hive tool. Do not grab the stinger and pull because it will inject more venom.
2. **Monitor the beekeeper for 20 minutes** - and if there are signs of difficulty breathing, administer an EpiPen and call 9-1-1. Redness, swelling, and soreness are normal symptoms. Difficulty breathing is not a normal symptom and requires medical attention.
3. **Monitor the beekeeper for the next 24 hours** - because, although rare, an anaphylaxis reaction can occur during that period.

How to remove a bee stinger



End.