

Backyard Buzz

Major Types of Honeybees

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5 Votes

Italian (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_bee): Italians are the most widely distributed race of honeybees. These are the

(<http://backyardbuzz.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/italianhoneybee.jpg>)

honeybees that I have in my hive as of right now. They are yellow and brown in color with distinct dark bands, like the name implies these bees hail from the Appenine Peninsula in Italy. They are **great** comb producers.

Pros: Very gentle, their productivity is high, usually rather disease tolerant (when queens are bred correctly), low **swarming** ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swarming_\(honey_bee\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swarming_(honey_bee))) tendencies

Cons: Not too much of a con but they keep a large winter colony and they require a lot of food going into the winter



Carniolan: (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carniolan_honey_bee) Dark, broad band colored bees, they come from the mountains of Austria and Yugoslavia. These honeybees are the second most prolific race in the world second only to the Italian bees. They are very quick to change brood laying

(http://backyardbuzz.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/carnica_bee_on_solidago.jpg)

rate, meaning they can stop laying more eggs if the pollen or honey flow stops and are able to start up again just as quickly.

Pros: Gentle, very reactive brood laying rate, can be kept in populated areas, resistant to brood diseases

Cons: Color tends to make queen hard to find, more prone to swarming if over crowded, low ability to survive in hot summer weather

Caucasian: (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasian_bee) The Caucasian honeybees hail from the Caucasian mountains near the Black Sea. They are mostly gray in color. They are EXTREMELY adaptable to harsh

(<http://backyardbuzz.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/caucasianbee.jpeg>)

weather conditions. That means they also use a lot of propolis to make sure there

are no cracks or holes of any kind in their hive. This could prove to be a challenge for the new beekeeper seeing as they will use it liberally in their new hive whether or not they need it.

Pros: Usually calm and gentle, they usually raise strong colonies

Cons: Tend to drift and rob, colony's not fully built up until mid-Summer, over wintering in cold climates not good due to susceptibility to **nosema** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diseases_of_the_honeybee)

Buckfast: (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buckfast_bee) Is a so-called "man made" bee breed, because a Benedictine monk at Buckfast Abby in the United Kingdom, Brother Adam, worked his whole life



(<http://backyardbuzz.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/buckfastbee.jpg>)

breeding all of the good qualities of the worlds most desirable races. The result is a race that is super gentle, high honey producers, and disease resistant.

Pros: "Super bee" that produces lots of honey, gentle, disease resistant, winters very well

Cons: Tends to rob other hives, and sometimes abscond.

Russian: (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_honey_bee) The Russian honeybees look like a dark Carniolan (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carniolan_bee) strain. The Russian honeybee refers to a very hardy bee that was actually sought out in the 90's by the USDA in an effort to find a honeybee that was resistant to the horrible varroa and

(http://backyardbuzz.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/russian_queen.jpg)

tracheal mites. What they found was that the Russian honeybees were indeed more resistant to the mite due to the fact that previous being brought to North America they have lived in an area with the mites for 150 years.

Pros: Very gentle, high over-wintering capability, usually less propolis used than Italian bees, less tendency towards stinging, high nectar haul per bee

Cons: More apt to building queen cells throughout the brood season making them have a higher tendency to swarm

View [Locations of the Five Major Honeybee Races](http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=113178744319339662419.000478e41e465ad136788&ll=37.09024,-95.712891&spn=20.981197,26.367188&z=4&source=embed) ([http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?](http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=113178744319339662419.000478e41e465ad136788&ll=37.09024,-95.712891&spn=20.981197,26.367188&z=4&source=embed)

[hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=113178744319339662419.000478e41e465ad136788&ll=37.09024,-95.712891&spn=20.981197,26.367188&z=4&source=embed](http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=113178744319339662419.000478e41e465ad136788&ll=37.09024,-95.712891&spn=20.981197,26.367188&z=4&source=embed)) in a larger map



Photo from [flickr](http://www.flickr.com/) (<http://www.flickr.com/>): "Bee on a leaf" -Eran Finkle (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/finklez/>)

Photo from [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carnica_bee_on_solidago.jpg) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carnica_bee_on_solidago.jpg)

Photo of "Caucasian Honeybee on a flower" from [here](http://www.freewebs.com/douglasfarm/Website%20Pictures/Caucasian.jpeg) (<http://www.freewebs.com/douglasfarm/Website%20Pictures/Caucasian.jpeg>)

Photo of "Single Buckfast Bee" from [here](http://www.beemagic.net/images/singlebee.jpg) (<http://www.beemagic.net/images/singlebee.jpg>)

Photo of "Russian bees serving their Queen!" from [here](http://www.beebehavior.com/beeimages/beelife/russian_queen_May11,2007.JPG) (http://www.beebehavior.com/beeimages/beelife/russian_queen_May11,2007.JPG)

One Response

1. [Becoming a Backyard Beekeeper: Part 3 « Backyard Buzz](#), on [November 18, 2009 at 7:15 pm](#) said:

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3 Votes

[...] Major Types of Honeybees [...]

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