

Piti Theatre Company
224 Avery Brook Road
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
USA
+1 508-439-2069
www.ptco.org
info@ptco.org



TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE CURRICULUM GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

We are excited to bring our musical *To Bee or Not to Bee* to your school! Thank you in advance for making time in your year for this event. Feel free to contact us at any time with questions or comments.

To Bee is the story of a farmer-beekeeper named James who gradually transforms his farm from a diverse ecosystem into a monoculture of corn – and in the process loses his bees until a traveler helps him re-transform the land. Below are some **pre-teaching activities** designed to help your students get the most out of the performance. More at www.ptco.org/tobee

1. Ask the class to describe a play. What are the elements (set, actors, props, script, etc.)? Follow up by supplying examples of elements that might have been left out (dance, clowning, puppetry, music).
2. Ask for a volunteer to dance, clown, or mime a theme/activity for the class--then talk about what they saw, encourage all answers, emphasizing that different interpretations are good, and are based on our own experiences. Tell the class that "To Bee" will contain many different elements (actors/set/puppetry/music/dance) and to look for them.
3. Watch a video on youtube or vimeo.com of bees doing their “waggle dance” telling other bees where to locate food.
4. Ask them what they already know about bees. Suggest they look for some of this knowledge to be reflected in the production.
5. Introduce post-show activity: After the play, we’re going to be painting a mural/planting seeds/etc. For post-show activity ideas, see our post-show worksheet on the reverse

RESOURCES + FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

Some organizations that might be interesting to your class or school.

- <http://www.houseofbees.com>– Seeds for planting bee gardens, instructions for making them.
- **United Plant Savers:** www.unitedplantsavers.org - Dedicated to preserving medicinal plants and their habitats.

- **Horizon Herbs:** www.horizonherbs.com - Selling medicinal plants of the world. You can order seeds and small plants from them. We have left a catalogue for the library.

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INSPIRATIONAL BEESOURCES

Film: Queen of the Sun, Vanishing of the Bees, More Than Honey

Books for Adults: Rowan Jacobsen's *Fruitless Fall*, Rudolf Steiner's *Bees: 8 Lectures*

Books for Children: Gail Gibbons' *The Honeymakers*, Jean Giorno's *The Man Who Planted Trees*, Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*,

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION OR WRITING TOPICS

- Farmer James receives advice from different characters during the play. What are some of the things these different characters/puppets want him to do? Why do you think they want him to follow their advice?
- In your life, you also receive different kinds of advice and suggestions from friends, teachers, and your family. Write about one time when you decided that this advice was either a very good or very bad idea. Why do you think so?
- James changes his farm during the play and then his bees disappear – the hives “collapse.” What is the connection between bees and his farm? In what ways do they depend on each other? How does James depend on the bees and they on him?

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

- Plant a bee garden and observe it over time. What kind of insects and growth can be observed at what points in the garden's evolution?
- If you are planting seeds with the class, research what each plant needs to be healthy and what it gives back. Do bees like this plant? Why? Link this exercise with ecosystems, discussing how every “event” in the system creates a ripple effect on the whole.
- If you are aware of local apiaries, go visit one. Have students write or draw about what they found. Contact us if you would like some help finding a local beekeeper.
- Pick one aspect of bee life and research it more deeply with the class.
- Honeybees are just one species of pollinator. What are some native bees? (bumblebee, mason bee, etc.) Other pollinators? (Butterflies, bats, flies, etc.) Draw or write poems about one of these species and their work.
- Make artwork, poems and skits expressing environmental concerns and how to live in harmony with nature – and bees. How can you show your gratitude to nature? Make a public exhibition.
- Think with the class what the town could do to improve the local environment. Write a letter to the mayor and explain the steps, or how you think the town should be organized for better harmony with nature.

- Role play a meeting of heads of state from around the world or hold a mock town meeting trying to solve issues facing bees and agriculture.
- Make a list of what you can do to help honeybees while also creating a healthy, lively, beautiful natural world that gives you what you need to live.
- Act out the different roles and/or stages in the hive (nurse bee, queen bee, worker bee, forager bee, larvae, drone, etc.)