

PLOS GENETICS

Public Library of Science | plosgenetics.org | Volume 16 | Issue 10 | October 2020



Selection and hybridization shaped the rapid spread of African honey bee ancestry in the Americas

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A honey bee collects pollen from mustard flowers in California.

Compared to European subspecies, honey bees adapted to the lowlands of southern and eastern Africa (*Apis mellifera scutellata*) preferentially forage for pollen over nectar and store little honey for winter. Foraging behavior is one of many divergently evolved traits that may contribute to a natural climatic range limit for scutellata-European hybrid honey bees, which spread rapidly out of Brazil in the 1950s and today dominate across tropical (but not temperate) regions in the Americas.

Image credit: Kathy Keatley Garvey.