

BEES & BEEKEEPING IN ZIMBABWE

Issued 14th April, 1998

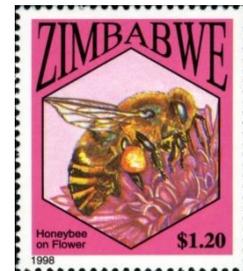
(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 2 of 1998)²



The immense value of honeybees to the country's indigenous flora and to cultivated crops is depicted on the First Day Cover, where bees are shown pollinating a crop of sunflowers, and on the Bulletin Cover where they are seen swarming amongst msasa trees. A description of the bees and the work they do, and of the beekeepers and hive products, appears on this set of six stamps.

\$1.20: Honeybee on Flower

Overall, honeybees are the most efficient of all pollinating insect species. As pollen contains essential proteins for the rearing of young bees, it is deliberately collected and packed into 'pollen baskets' on the last pair of the worker's legs for transport back to the nest. There it is combined with honey and stored in cells as 'bee bread.' In addition, sticky pollen grains adhere to plumose body hairs for transference between plants that need cross-pollination for better seed set. The economic importance of bee-pollination of cultivated crops, and of numerous wild plants that nourish domestic animals, greatly exceeds the value of all hive products.



\$4.10: Queen, Worker & Drone

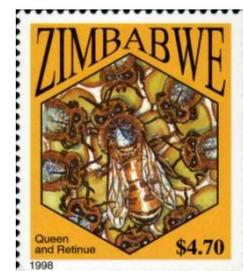
Each bee is adapted for specialised functions: queen as egg-layer, workers as food collectors and defenders of the nest, and drones, whose only, but vital purpose is to mate with queens.

The race of African bees, *Apis mellifera scutellata*, is found inland from South Africa to Ethiopia. The well-publicised, defensive behaviour of relatively few colonies of these bees results from millennia of predation. However, their productive and active qualities ensure their extensive, effective management, production and crop-pollination in Zimbabwe.



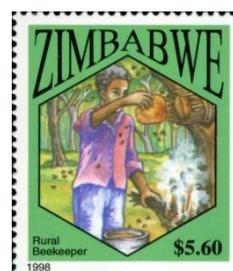
\$4.70: Queen & Retinue

The queen deposits a single egg with great precision at the base of each waxen cell. As flowers bloom to provide nectars and pollens for the bees, a healthy, fecund queen must lay several thousand eggs each day to ensure that the colony can withstand the effects of natural mortality and predation. Young honeybees feed the queen on royal jelly and constantly groom her; in doing so they absorb and distribute a 'queen substance' that establishes the identity of the colony and regulates seasonal reproductive swarming.



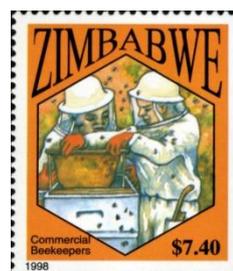
\$5.60: Rural Beekeeper

The estimated eight to ten thousand keepers of traditional log and bark hives in Zimbabwe play an important part in the economy of rural people. Relatively unsophisticated hives are skilfully managed by many fine beekeepers whose expertise has for centuries been passed down through word of mouth and practical, hands-on experience. Zimbabwe will realise honey and beeswax production potentials well in excess of domestic consumption as more of these beekeepers gain access to modern, scientific beekeeping technology and management techniques.



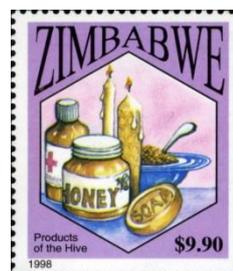
\$7.40: Commercial Beekeepers

Movable-frame hives, particularly of Langstroth specifications, have been in use in the country since the turn of the century. With appropriate management they produce more honey, more regularly—not least because of gains in bee welfare and survival. Of great importance, the colonies they contain are easily moved to and from crops needing pollination. Although movable-frame hives are precision-made and therefore comparatively expensive, it will be through their use that Zimbabwe may eventually join the honey-exporting countries of the world.



\$9.90: Hive Products

In addition to honey and beeswax, other valuable, though lesser-known resources are found in beehives: *pollens*, in the form of bee bread, are also nutritious for humans; bee sting treatments are derived from *bee venom*; and *propolis*, more popularly known as 'bee glue' possesses antibacterial, anti-fungal, and anti-viral properties. Zimbabweans will benefit as the possibilities of all hive products in alternative medical, nutrient, cosmetic, and manufacturing applications are recognised and exploited.



Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC¹	Value	Description
964	392	\$1.20	Honeybee on Flower
965	393	\$4.10	Queen, Worker & Drone
966	394	\$4.70	Queen & Retinue
967	395	\$5.60	Rural Beekeeper
968	396	\$7.40	Commercial Beekeepers
969	397	\$9.90	Products of the Hive

Technical details

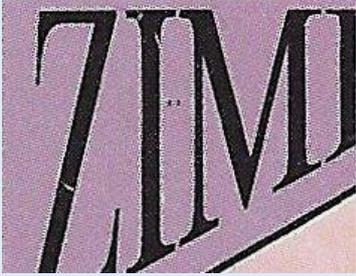
Stamp size:	All values	30 x 35 mm		
Sheet Size:	50 stamps (5 rows of 10 stamps), two panes per printed sheet			
Artist:	Jan Desmond & Gaye Dixon			
Paper:	ZSC paper type F - Although still officially described as HS8, the paper properties changed in 1996. This is fluorescent front but non-fluorescent back and the gum is whitish PVA.			
Print colours:	Cyan, magenta, yellow & black			
Perforations:	SG 14 x 14½, ZSC 14 x 14¼ Right margin: Perforated through. Other margins: Imperforate			
Printer:	NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe			
Printer's Imprint:	Bottom Margin, below Row 5 Column 5 & 6. Imprint printed in black			
Cylinder numbers:	Bottom margin below R5/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black			
Colour register:	Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R5/10. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black			
Sheet Value:	Bottom margin, below R5/10, printed in black.			
Sheet Number:	Type SN 4a with 'PTC' prefix, right margin opposite R5/10, reading down			
Print numbers:	\$1.20	2,000,000	\$4.10	190,000
	\$4.70	190,000	\$5.60	190,000
	\$7.40	190,000	\$9.90	190,000
Issue date:	14 th April, 1998			
Withdrawal from sale:				
Demonetarisaton:				

Listed varieties

No listed varieties have been noted

Unlisted Varieties

There are numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps, particularly in the backgrounds.

 <p>\$1.20: “Cracked wing” variety. <i>(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)</i></p>	 <p>\$9-90: White scratches in ‘Z’ & ‘I’, and two black marks between ‘IM’. Cyl 1B R5/9 (Courtesy Narendhra Morar)</p>	
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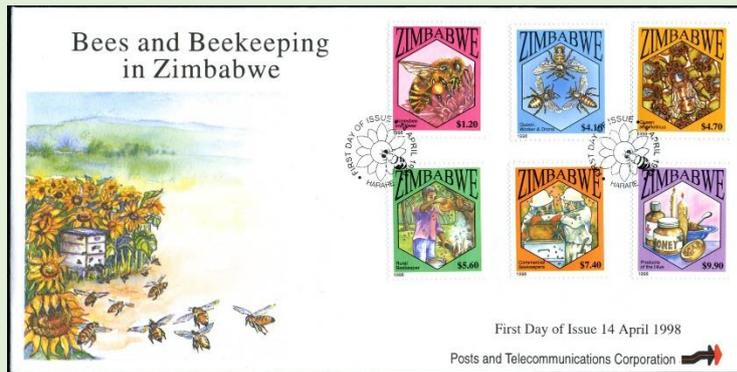
First Day Cover

The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear.

A pictorial first day of issue canceller was produced for this issued and was used by the Philatelic Bureau. Other first day cover cancellers continued to be used at main post offices.

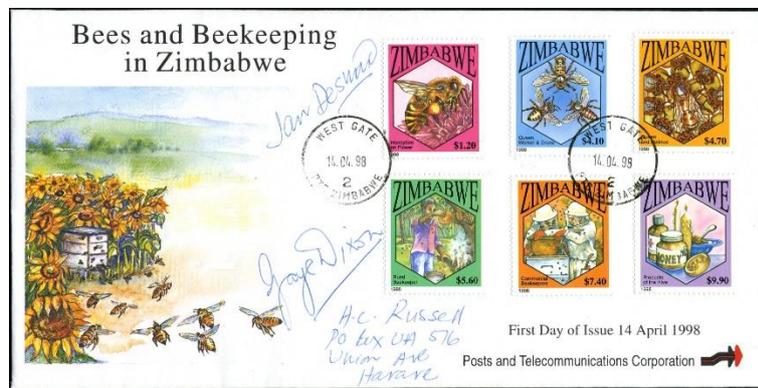


ZW075.1 (PTC)

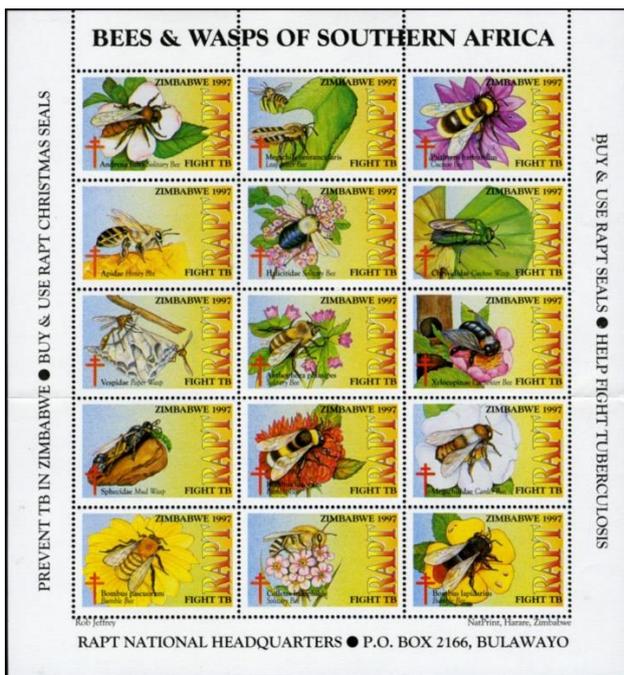


220 x 110 mm

Related Material



First Day Cover signed by Jan Desmond and Gaye Dixon, the artists



1997: RAPT Labels:
Bees & Wasps of Southern Africa.



Rhodesian Bee-Keeping Council
Conference at Great Zimbabwe,
7th to 9th June 1974.
Also celebrating 25 year of the Bee
Research Association

Bibliography:

1. "The Zimbabwean Concise Postage Stamp Catalogue", published by Harare Stamp Company, edited by Ken Allanson, Mike Amos and Geoff Brakspear. The catalogue continues to be updated and expanded by Geoff Brakspear
2. PTC Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 2 of 1998.