

## How the Honey Bee got their Stinger – A Cherokee Legend



<http://www.northerncherokeeanation.com/how-the-honey-bee-got-their-stinger.html>

Back in ancient times, when the people were purer and could converse with the animals. The Creator would visit with them. The people asked the Creator for something that was "sweet" to the taste. So, the Creator sent the Bee, but the Bee had no stinger. Down came the Bee and it found a suitable tree in which, they could build their hive, live in, produce honey, multiply and feed its young. Soon the people came to the Bee and asked for some of the sweet syrup and the Bee gave each person a container full. The people loved the syrup and greedily ate it, then went back to the Bee for more.

But the Bee replied, "I have no more to give you for a while. You will have to wait." The people were not happy, as they craved the sweet syrup. So, they called upon the Creator, saying, "the Bee does not give us enough of the golden syrup. We want more!!!" The Creator listened and sent down the Flower People. The Flower People began to spread all types of flowers across the land giving the Bees greater access and variety of flowers to pollinate and make more honey. The Flower People spread all kinds of beautiful wild flowers around to attract the Bees; bright blue, red, orange, purple and yellow. More Bees were created to help pollinate the flowers. The hive grew to be very large. The people seeing how big the hive was, went to get more of the sweet syrup. So, the Bees gave all the syrup to the people but left enough to feed their young.

The people devoured the syrup and wanted more. The Bee responded, "We don't have anymore, you will have to wait." The people were angry and asked the Flower People to make more flowers, so they could have more of the golden syrup to eat. The Flower People responded, "we made all the flowers we could, and they are all pollinated. You will have to wait until spring. "No", said the people, "we want more now!!" So, they went back to the bee's hive and tore it apart killing almost all of the Bees and taking the syrup. The remaining Bees were angry. They asked the Creator what to do. The Creator was also annoyed at the behavior of the people, so he told the Flower People to create some "briar bushes" and for the Bees to eat the briars.

The Bees did as the Creator said, they ate the briars, and these were transformed into stingers. The Flower People created an entire briar patch around the Bee's tree. The next day, the people came back and started toward the Bee's hive for more syrup; but the briars around the tree scratched and tore at their bodies. Some of the people made it through the briars to the hive. Covered in welts, they yelled at the Bees, "Give us some more syrup now, or we will do the same as we did yesterday, kill your young and destroy your home!" The Bees became angry and a loud hum came from the hive in the tree, and out they swarmed. The Bees stung the people all over until they were covered in welts and sent them running.

After that day, the people treated the Bees, flowers, and plants with great respect and always promised to replace whatever they asked for and never be greedy or take more than they needed.