

Beeswax Candle Making Playshop

Thank you for attending this Beeswax Candle Making playshop! Here is some basic information about bees and the hard work they put into creating the beeswax we will be using today.

An average beehive is home to at least 50,000 bees, mostly female. The bees are divided into “classes”: worker bees gather pollen and nectar, nurse bees care for the eggs and larvae, and attendant bees care for the queen, who lays approximately 500 eggs a day. Male bees, or drones, comprise only 5% of the bee population; their main task is to fertilize a new queen. After only one breeding, the queen will lay eggs for the remainder of her life (usually 3 years)! Bees mature from eggs to adults in 21 days. The average life span of a worker bee is six weeks; by that time their wings have worn out from so much use!

Candle waxes are derived from animal (beeswax, tallow), vegetable (bayberry, carnauba, and soy), and mineral (paraffin, microcrystalline). For centuries available only to the church or the very affluent, beeswax is the world’s finest candle wax; it burns cleaner and longer than any other. Honey gives this wax its natural color and scent.

Bees use the same amount of energy to produce one pound of wax as nine pounds of honey! So approximately, it takes:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 🐝 10 flowers to yield one drop of nectar | 🐝 one bee can hold one drop of nectar per trip |
| 🐝 10 drops of nectar to yield one drop of honey | 🐝 1000 flowers yield one drop of beeswax |
| 🐝 10 drops of honey to yield one drop of beeswax | 🐝 “Busy as a bee” takes on new meaning, eh? |

Pollination is the primary commercial use for bees. The apple orchards in our western NC area are a perfect example of an industry which benefits from bees. In the spring, beekeepers move their hives to these orchards so their bees can pollinate the blossoms. This must happen at the exactly correct time, which is dependent upon weather, blossom maturity, etc. in order for the best pollination to occur for the largest apples. The honey and beeswax produced as a “byproduct” of pollination are a side-line income for most commercial beekeepers.

The word “honey” comes from ancient Hebrew and means “enchant”. Long used as a culinary sweetener, honey is valued for its many healing properties as well. Treatment with honey is called *apitherapy*; benefits can include replenishing energy, enhancing physical stamina, and strengthening those weakened by illness or stress. Honey can also help calm the mind and promote rejuvenating sleep. In addition, honey relieves indigestion and is used to treat cardiovascular disease and respiratory complaints (it helps to dissolve mucus). A thin coat of honey can be applied to the skin to disinfect and heal minor skin wounds and chapped lips.

Honey contains only slight traces of residues from industrial emissions, car exhausts, and agricultural chemicals because bees act as a biological filter: they die if they come into contact with toxins and thus do not bring pollutants into the hive.

Honey provides a healthy pick-me-up. The principle constituents of honey are the simple sugars glucose and fructose, which have been predigested by the bees that produce it. These simple sugars are quickly and easily absorbed in the human digestive tract, and they have an overall soothing effect. (1 T of honey has 64 calories compared to 46 in 1 T of granulated sugar)

Honey contains grains of pollen that, over time, may have a desensitizing effect, making it useful for the relief of allergies; hay fever sufferers are advised to eat honey that has been harvested locally. Honey is an outstanding household remedy that can be used in combination with various medicinal herbs. For relief of coughs and wheezing associated with bronchitis, whooping cough, or other minor respiratory ailments, mix 1 tsp of finely chopped fresh thyme in a little honey. Take the mixture orally as needed to soothe inflamed lungs and airways. -- From *The Complete Guide to Natural Healing*, given as information, not meant as medical advice.

Kate Stockman, The Cre8tive Flow, www.TheCre8tiveFlow.com, 828-674-5978

Order beeswax sheets from: Earth Guild www.Earthguild.com if ordering a few sheets; from Mann Lake (apiary supplier) www.mannlakeltd.com if ordering in bulk. Be sure to order “medium brood foundation without wires” Their item # FN-277, Product Name: 4 3/4" X 16 3/4" BROOD FOUNDATION