

# Medicine from the Hive

## an introduction to apitherapy

PRISCILLA COE

*Apitherapy refers to the therapeutic use of the honeybee's hive products: honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly and bee venom. Honey is one of the best possible sources of high quality nourishment and energy, and greatly supports digestion, a foundation of good health. Pollen is an excellent protein source containing all amino acids, along with vitamins and trace nutrients. Propolis is nature's antibiotic. Royal jelly rejuvenates tired organs and the skin. Bee venom therapy increases local circulation and supports the overall vitality of the body. For the best medicine, look for the highest quality hive products available from holistic beekeepers.*

### honey

Honey has been called the "original medicine" and has been revered cross-culturally as a gift from the gods. Interestingly, it is often offered as a gift back to the heavens in ceremonies. It is worth contemplating honey from its source, the nectar. Everyone knows that the honeybees gather floral nectar and take it back to the hive where they transform it to honey. The botanical world has created a magnificent seduction scene, creating nectar to attract pollinators. Why? The plants want to insure their own future through the production of fruits and seeds. At its essence, we could say that honey retains this same life-affirming quality that we observe in the plant's nectar. Honey nourishes us and strengthens us and fundamentally prepares us for life. This observation on the living vitality of honey is echoed in Rudolf Steiner's book, *Bees*, "They [the honeybees] have indeed carried into the hive that which lives in the flowers. When you begin to

think through all of this properly, you will have unlocked the whole secret of the beehive. The living element of this thriving, germinating love that is spread out over the flowers is also contained in the honey the bees make."

Honey is anti-bacterial, an excellent digestive aid, and provides extraordinary, readily available nourishment. It is rapidly assimilated as it does not need further enzymes for digestion. It builds the blood, supports memory, is a heart tonic, is used in ophthalmology, is anti-toxic, improves digestion for children and adults and specifically aids in fat digestion. Honey contains an enzyme which produces hydrogen peroxide, making honey an aid in eliminating stomach bacteria, as well as an excellent topical wound dressing. Consuming raw, local honey alleviates pollen allergies. Honey contains glucose and fructose and other sugars, is rich in minerals (especially the dark honeys) and has vast numbers of enzymes and phyto-nutrients.

Honeys vary enormously and embody the locale, terroir, season, nectar and pollen sources the bees foraged on. Varietal honeys come from a dominant botanical source and can support specific conditions. To be therapeutic, honey must be pure and raw, i.e., unheated, and stored away from heat and light. As appreciation of honey increases, it is a joy to learn about monofloral or varietal honeys, and the specific attributes of each. For example, buckwheat honey is one of the highest in antioxidants of all honeys, and orange blossom honey is particularly supportive of digestion.

Honey has been studied for its role in recovery nutrition, particularly after sports exertion. Taking one tablespoon of honey within an hour before going to bed is known to provide glucose and fructose during sleep that nourish the liver and brain, allowing the body to divert energy to renew other systems. Honey improves the quality of sleep. It is often recommended in apitherapy to take another tablespoon of honey in

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# Honeybee Insights

from Anastasia of the Siberian Taiga

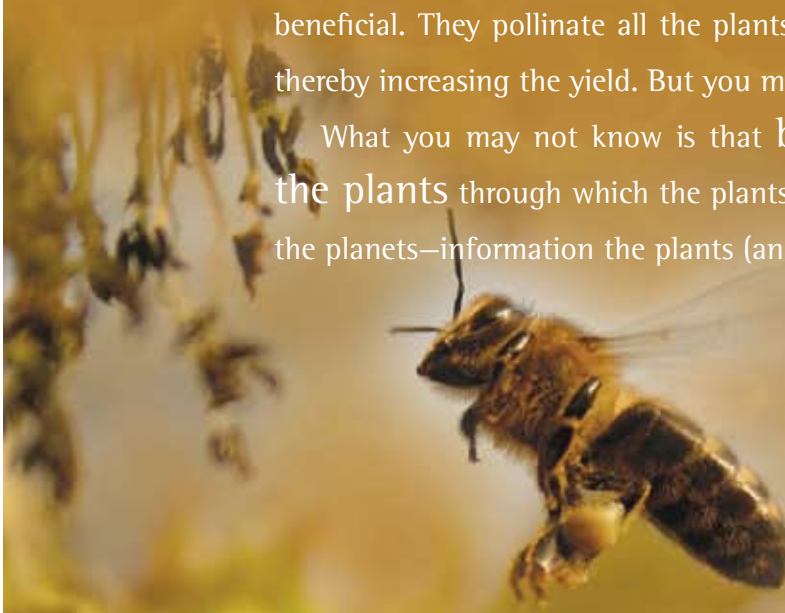
“**B**eekeepers today have concocted a lot of different ways of constructing a hive, but all of them involve constant human intervention in its operation—they move the honeycomb frames around within the hive, or move both the hive and the bees to a different spot for the winter, and that is something they should not do.

Bees build their honeycombs at a specific distance apart to facilitate both ventilation and defense against their enemies, and any human intervention breaks down this system. Instead of spending their time gathering honey and raising offspring, the bees are obliged to fix what has been broken.

Under natural conditions bees live in tree hollows and cope with any situation perfectly well on their own. I told you that they should be kept under conditions as close to their natural ones as possible. Their presence is extremely beneficial. They pollinate all the plants much more effectively than any other agent, thereby increasing the yield. But you must know this pretty well already.

What you may not know is that bees’ mouths open up channels in the plants through which the plants take in supplemental information reflected by the planets—information the plants (and, subsequently, human beings) require.”

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(Book One of The Ringing Cedars Series)  
By Vladimir Megre, Translated from the Russian  
by John Woodsworth, Edited by Leonid Sharashkin  
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## 6th Graders Build a Beehive



Last September, sixth grade students at the The Toronto Waldorf School were busy putting together a beehive under the direction of their "official beekeeper" and high school science teacher, Bob Pickering, in preparation for the spring. In May of 2008, students installed a hive nucleus at the back of the school's 31-acre campus, in order to start a new colony of bees.

**THE TORONTO WALDORF SCHOOL**, now in its 40th year, is a leader in providing education from a deeper perspective.<sup>TM</sup> TWS creates an educational experience that inspires students to evolve into creative thinkers who are personally centered and strongly connected to humanity and the environment, from Parent and Infant through Grade 12.

Waldorf education, founded in 1919, is one of the world's largest and fastest growing educational movements. Based on a rich, age-appropriate and integrated curriculum, it has been recognized by the United Nations as a successful and inspiring model of nurturing, developmentally appropriate education. There are more than 2000 Waldorf schools and kindergartens in over 70 countries, including 25 in Canada.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE TORONTO WALDORF SCHOOL

### Bee Therapy *[continued from page 12]*

the morning. We can imagine ourselves at the health food store, navigating the supplement aisles thinking we might need to buy selenium, digestive enzymes, or myriad other supplements. In taking two tablespoons of honey per day, many of these nutritional needs are met in a natural, balanced way.

Honey has long been used to help with healing wounds. After cleansing the wound, honey is applied to the gauze on a bandage and then applied over the wound. The honey is highly anti-microbial and helps to reduce inflammation so wounds heal more quickly. Many folk remedies abound for using honey. It has long been used in the eyes. One drop of honey (from a known pure supply) can be placed on the lower eyelid with a toothpick. There will be a strong burning sensation for several minutes. This treatment is extremely cleansing to the eyes, often with a noticeable discharge in the corners of the eye the following morning when done before bedtime. One cup of honey can be added to a warm bath to calm the nervous system. This treatment has a lovely cleansing quality and is not sticky whatsoever, and the image of thousands of floral visits by the bees is, itself, an uplifting picture. Honey is an excellent alternative to soap in washing the skin, and lavender honey is specific to dermatology. Simply rinse the face, and use about one teaspoon of honey to cleanse the skin, then rinse and dry.

Honey loses many of its benefits when heated, and is best eaten raw. Honey that is still in the comb has not been exposed to air, and so will retain the highest number of nutrients, an important fact to consider when sourcing honey for someone who is ill. Honey can be incorporated into many recipes. One very nourishing and delicious recipe is for a honey-sesame spread that is popular in

Greece: Combine the proportions of 60 percent honey with 40 percent sesame tahini, and then add in some chopped nuts, such as pistachios. This is delicious served on bread, crackers or apple slices. Of course, honey is delicious in tea, both hot and iced, and has a particular affinity with summer herbs such as lemon verbena, lemon balm and peppermint.

## pollen

The bees disseminate pollen, ensuring blossoms, fruit set and seeds. It is captivating to watch the honeybees pack pollen into the sacks on their hind legs, and then carry it back to the hive. In the hive, the bees use this high protein food, often mixed with floral nectar or honey, as an important food to nourish their young.

Pollen can be described as a very "yang" food, and is best taken in the morning or afternoon as it is stimulating

for some people. It is rapidly and easily absorbed by the body. It increases stamina, builds the immune system, is anti-inflammatory, and an antioxidant. Nutrients vary with botanical sources. Pollen contains all amino acids, including all essential amino acids, enzymes, vitamins, and a wealth of minerals—it is second only to Brazil nuts in selenium, a key nutrient for the immune system. It is available fresh and dried, and the fresher the better, so the ideal scenario is to buy local pollen directly from a beekeeper. Store fresh pollen in the refrigerator. It is best to start with only a few grains of pollen per day, working up to a few teaspoons or tablespoons, especially if someone has pollen allergies.

Pollen can be added to smoothies and yogurt. Stirring it into water or juice and letting it sit for a half hour or even overnight tends to open up older pollen grains that may have started to dry out. Pollen can also be mixed with honey

to make a nourishing spread. We have many excellent sources to buy pollen in the U.S.

## propolis

Propolis is a complex mix of tree resins, beeswax, essential oils, digestive secretions of bees, and sometimes pollen. The honeybees use it as a "glue" to keep frames and so on from moving around in the hive, and also as an antimicrobial to maintain the hygiene of the hive. For example, the bees line cells with a thin film of propolis before packing in honey and pollen layers to make beebread, an important food for the hive.

In apitherapy, propolis has antibiotic qualities, and we can think of propolis as nature's intelligent antibiotic. It is a profoundly under-discovered remedy, and a top ally for preventive medicine. In general, propolis is anti-viral, anti-fungal, anti-tumoral, an anti-oxidant, and anti-inflammatory. It supports cellular

## uriel remedies using apis

The following remedies contain ingredients in homeopathic amounts:

### Apis/Belladonna Pellets

A basic remedy for all kinds of illnesses with fever and inflammation (sore throat, chicken pox, abscesses, etc.).

### Apis/Levisticum Pellets

This remedy of honeybee and lovage root helps soothes earaches.

### Aurum/Hypericum Pellets

Apis regina (queen bee) combines with gold, St. John's wort and other ingredients for a broad range of uses, including nervous exhaustion, nervous insomnia, depressed mood, and weak concentration or memory.

### Berberis/Larix Pellets

Honeybee is used with barberry root, larch resin and other ingredients in this remedy to help support the bladder.

### Formica/Apis Pellets

Honeybee and red wood ant are used in this remedy to soothe rheumatic joint pain.

These remedies are available as pellets or ampules from Uriel Pharmacy. While these products are available without prescription, we recommend consulting your health care practitioner regarding your condition and choice of remedies.

These product statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

## true botanica offers many products containing biodynamic beeswax

Boswellia Lip Balm™

Cleansing Cream

Face Moisturizing Cream

Hand & Body Moisturizer

Aurum Pentas™ Cream

Cuprum Pentas™ Cream

Real Arnica Ultra Cream

Relief 4x Cream

[www.truebotanica.com](http://www.truebotanica.com)

## resources

### [www.apitherapy.org](http://www.apitherapy.org)

The American Apitherapy Society; membership organization; Journal; conferences.

### [www.apitherapy.com](http://www.apitherapy.com)

International site hosted by Dr. Stefan Stangaciu of Romania; lists international conferences and trainings; sign up for excellent international apitherapy email list.

### [www.apimondia.org](http://www.apimondia.org)

Apimondia is the International Federation of Beekeepers Associations. It has an Apitherapy Commission which has produced an excellent Apitherapy CD (available through the American Apitherapy Society for \$37.50) with PowerPoint presentations.

In October 2006, the Apitherapy Commission held its first international conference in Athens, Greece, Apimedita2006,

### [www.apimedita2006.gr](http://www.apimedita2006.gr)

Proceedings will be available. The second Apimedita is scheduled for Rome, June 9–12, 2008, [www.apimedita.org](http://www.apimedita.org).

[www.beevenom.com](http://www.beevenom.com) Michael Simics of Apitronic Services in British Columbia is regarded as one of the world's bee venom experts. He sells venom in several forms, including as a topical skin cream; royal jelly; acupuncture charts, etc.

### [www.honeylocator.com](http://www.honeylocator.com)

National Honey Board

[www.apitherapynews.com](http://www.apitherapynews.com) The bees have a blog!

### [www.draperbee.com/beesupplies/videos.htm](http://www.draperbee.com/beesupplies/videos.htm)

Draper's Super Bee Apiaries in Pennsylvania has apitherapy videos for sale and for low cost rental.

### [www.wholepropolis.com](http://www.wholepropolis.com)

Whole Propolis—North American and Brazilian green propolis in water solution.

## Bee Therapy *[continued from page 15]*

renewal and repair, and wound healing. It oxygenates cells, and is an important nerve. Propolis provides a high range of phyto-nutrients that vary depending on source, and is known for its anti-toxic and anti-tumoral properties. Research worldwide on propolis from different regions of the world is affirming that propolis varies by locale, with green propolis from Brazil being noted for its anti-cancer properties. Unfortunately, green propolis is virtually unavailable in the U.S. at this point.

Obtain propolis from hives in pristine regions. Water, fat and high-proof alcohol are all required to break down all the constituents in propolis. Therefore, take propolis in a variety of forms: take it in capsules, chew a small pea-size piece of propolis like gum, blend ground propolis with honey and take propolis as a tincture. The tincture is best able to extract the large quantity of flavonoids in propolis. Fortunately, there are many excellent propolis products for sale in the U.S. marketplace.

## royal jelly

Royal jelly is produced by young bees and fed to bee larvae for their first few days, and also fed to the queen for her entire, lengthy, life span. Imagining the queen, who lives for as long as six years in the darkness of the hive, highly generative in her sustained laying of thousands of eggs, gives us a very yin picture. Similarly, in apitherapy, we could say that royal jelly has a very yin function. It is highly rejuvenating both internally for tired organs and topically for the skin, is anti-viral when obtained from pure sources and contains key neurotransmitters. It is commonly taken at bedtime, and can support restorative sleep.

Royal Jelly supports the heart and immune system, is anti-aging, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and is believed to reduce cholesterol and triglycerides and

modulate high and low blood pressure. Royal jelly contains water; amino acids; Vitamins A, B-complex (especially B3 and B5), C, D and E; acetylcholine (a neurotransmitter); decanoic acid (natural antibiotic); sulfur; sugars and trace nutrients. Royal jelly is available fresh and freeze-dried. Virtually all royal jelly on the market is imported from Asia and quality standards are frequently questioned. Occasionally, U.S. beekeepers will sell local royal jelly in honey, and in befriending a beekeeper it is possible to ask for royal jelly from a queen cell in the spring.

Dr. Bengsch of the Max Planck Institute in Germany noted at Apimedita 2006 in Athens that there can be a factor of 100 times difference in royal jelly obtained from industrial production, and royal jelly when it is obtained from hives where bees have foraged on organic plants grown in very healthy soil. He recommends fresh royal jelly, and notes that the proteins in royal jelly break down when it is frozen.

## bee venom therapy (bvt)

From the standpoint of the hive, bees will sting people when they feel the hive is under threat. In other words, a bee sting can be thought of as a loud, collective "No!" issuing from the hive. There is something of this "no" energy that is retained in bee venom therapy, as it is often a treatment of last resort for difficult illnesses. Historically, BVT is best known for treating arthritis and rheumatism as it greatly improves local circulation. Today, it is used to treat MS, pain, scar tissue, cancer, and a vast number of other conditions, though much of this pioneering work is being done outside the United States.


Bee venom is anti-inflammatory, an immuno-stimulant and overall supporter of life. It dredges toxins



from the body and increases cortisol production. Systemically, it is an "energy medicine" that acts on both the physical and subtle bodies. Important for its neuro-transmitters, it supports memory and, ultimately, affects consciousness. Beekeepers have a statistically low rate of cancer. Approximately half the venom is made up of mellitin, though at least forty constituents have been identified in it so far. To minimize reactions, BVT is best done after one has followed a 100 percent organic diet for several months in order to cleanse and strengthen the system, along with using the other hive products extensively.

BVT should only be done by knowledgeable practitioners who are fully prepared to handle a life-threatening reaction and are trained in using an Epi-Pen. With proper respect for this potent modality and an understanding of medical conditions, BVT may provide miraculous healing and support for the

most challenging of illnesses. BVT is commonly done on acupuncture points, though "stinging where it hurts" is a common folk medicine practice. The apitherapy web sites offer stinging protocols, charts, videos, and books.

The best way to learn more about apitherapy is to join the American Apitherapy Society, and to attend one of the annual trainings this organization puts on. There are also books, resources on the web, and international conferences. To foster the availability of pure, local hive products, ask beekeepers in your area about their hive management practices—do they use chemicals in their hives or are they taking a holistic approach to caring for the bees? 

**PRISCILLA COE** is a beekeeper in Sonoma CA. She works in food public relations in San Francisco and is a long-time student of many aspects of holistic healing. She is a frequent contributor to the *Journal of the American Apitherapy Society*. A recent project is a honeybee sanctuary in Healdsburg California, The Melissa Garden, [www.themelissagarden.com](http://www.themelissagarden.com). Contact her at [priscillacoe@earthlink.net](mailto:priscillacoe@earthlink.net) or PO Box 1267, Sonoma CA 95476.

## books

*Bees*, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press, Great Barrington, MA, 1998.

*Bee Well Bee Wise*, Bernard Jensen, Ph. D., Bernard Jensen Publisher, Escondido, CA, 1994.

*The Bible of Bee Venom Therapy*, Bodog F. Beck, M.D. Health Resources Press, Inc., Silver Spring, MD, 1997.

*Health & The Honeybee* by Charles Mraz

*Honey and Your Health*, Bodog F. Beck, M.D. and Doree Smedley, Health Resources Press, Inc., Silver Spring, MD, 1997.

*Propolis*, James Fearnley, Souvenir Press, 2001.

*The Hibernation Diet*, by Mike McInnes, Stuart McInnes, and Maggie Stanfield, Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

## The Honeybee and the Image of the Tree

*In the tree we see, as it were, an earthbound bee colony. That which corresponds to the egg is claimed by the earth; the larvae are transformed into leaves. What is contracted in the tree as a fruit bud is a chrysalis formation, and that which develops into the lovely creature, the drone, is seen as what unfolds in the tree as a blossom.*

*In the annual plant we see that at work which gives plants their transitory nature. With the tree, we see that manifested which makes them enduring, and which surrounds the tree with bark and rind. In the bark of every tree we find formic acid, and also—what is closely akin to it—that which later becomes bee poison.*

*In the tree we have also a wonderful cellular structure which forms the trunk and limbs: a supporting body. It raises this great colony of leaves high above the surrounding plants. They construct for themselves, as it were, a super-earthly environment.*

*The bee organism also constructs a cellular body for the colony. It too selects a place high above the earth. The remarkable thing about the bee is really not that it produces honey, but that it produces the marvelous structure of the honeycomb out of its own being. The combs within the hive are the body of a living organism, and it is well worth our attention to note that in modern beekeeping this body assumes an arbitrary form.*

*In the tree we have also the cambium. Here lies the maternal element of this earthbound bee colony. In the bee colony we have the queen, the bearer of the maternal element and also that which expresses itself as sexual life. In the others, that is, the workers, the sexual life is more or less suppressed.*

UNDERSTANDING THE HONEY BEE by C.T.G. Baker  
Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association, 1948

