



Honey: How Sweet it is!

Maybe you like to put honey on your toast or add a little to your coffee or tea. You know honey comes from bees, but aren't quite sure how the honey gets from the bee to your kitchen table. Honey is a natural unrefined sweetener produced by honeybees from the nectar of flowers.

Paul and Lori Kittilsen of Kittilsen's Honey in Debert know the various stages of getting honey from the bees to your table. Paul has been doing so full-time for more than 15 years. He also provides hives to blueberry growers to help them pollinate their blueberry blossoms.

Lori explains that it all starts with honeybees collecting nectar from wildflowers. Nectar is 80% water and complex sugars. The bee uses her long, tube-like tongue to suck the nectar out of the flowers. She stores this nectar in her "honey stomach."

Each honeybee must visit between 100 and 1500 flowers in order to fill her honey stomach. When she has filled her stomach she returns to the hive and passes the nectar onto other worker bees. These "house bees" then "chew" the nectar for about half an hour, and enzymes break the complex sugars in the nectar into simple sugars.

The bees then deposit the honey in the cells of the honeycomb, which is inside the frames of the wooden boxes (supers). In the honeycomb the house bees make the honey dry by fanning it with their wings. When the honey is dry enough, the bees seal off the cell of the honeycomb with wax.

Once the bees have filled the frames in the honey supers, from midsummer to fall, the boxes are taken back to the farm. The wax is removed from the honeycomb by an uncapping machine. The individual frames are loaded into a machine called an extractor, which spins the frames until centrifugal force releases the honey. The honey is put in drums for storage until it is packaged and sold at local stores and markets.

And that's how honey gets to your table.

Every day, a honeybee makes 10 trips and visits more than 1,000 flowers. Over its lifetime, each honeybee will make approximately one teaspoon of honey.



KITILSEN'S Wildflower
HONEY

80 George Weatherby Rd.
 R.R. #1 Debert,
 Nova Scotia, B0M 1G0

phone 902-662-4072
 fax 902-662-2908
 cell 902-899-0049
 pl.kittilsen@ns.sympatico.ca

Paul and Lori Kittilsen