

# Honey, we have the facts

Go sweet on honey!

With opportunities for hive sponsorship, and beekeeping classes available at its Honey School near Kinross, Webster Honey is looking forward to a busy autumn. Its local, sustainable honey can be [purchased online](#) with a range of gift hampers available as we move towards Christmas.

With interest in honey, and in saving bees at an all time high, Webster Honey has put together ten informative facts about honey. Sweet, delicious and good for you, honey is indeed a natural wonder, an antiseptic, an anti inflammatory, a natural sweetener, and capable of mixing well with a variety of other flavours. Here are some incredible facts surrounding honey that set this golden substance apart from other foodstuffs.

## 1. HONEY WILL NEVER GO OFF.

When sealed in an airtight container, honey keeps indefinitely! This can be attributed to the chemical makeup: honey is naturally acidic and low in moisture, so that bacteria cannot survive.

When the nectar (honey's main ingredient) is transformed into

the honey, the bees flap their wings very hard to draw excess moisture out of the initially water-filled substance. They also have a special enzyme in their stomachs that helps to break the nectar down into two substances – gluconic acid and hydrogen peroxide. The latter prevents the growth of bacteria and other organisms in the honey.

## 2. BUSY LIKE A BEE IS VERY VERY TRUE.

Bees are extremely industrious, with a typical beehive producing anywhere from 30 to 100 pounds of honey a year. A single pound of honey involves bees collecting nectar from approximately 2 million flowers which involves flying over 55,000 miles. It's a lifetime's worth of work for around 800 bees.

## 3. BEES SURVIVE ON HONEY IN THE WINTER.

To ensure they have enough honey to last the winter, bees will work hard all summer. When it starts to get cold, they cluster themselves around the queen and shiver to fill the hive with warmth. Shivering in this way burns a lot of calories, so honey makes for a perfect high-energy diet.

## 4 HONEY IS MEDICINAL.

Honey has been used in medicine since ancient times. As it's so inhospitable to bacteria, honey was often used as a natural bandage to protect cuts and burns from infection. Today, it's a natural treatment for a whole list of ailments, from dandruff, to stomach ulcers, and even seasonal allergies.

## 5. FOR BEES, A LITTLE HONEY GOES A LONG WAY.

On average, a honey bee produces 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey over the course of its life. This doesn't sound much at all – but only two tablespoons of honey would be enough to fuel a bee's entire flight around the world.

## 6. NOT ALL BEES MAKE HONEY.

Honey bees are very specific in being the ones that produce honey, as there are around 20,000 species of bees on earth, with only a very small fraction making honey. Truly something to treasure!

#### 7. BEES HAVE MADE HONEY FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS.

With honey being found in Egyptian tombs it is obvious that honey has been around for a long, long time, but it goes back far longer than this, to the dawn of time when, around 130 million years ago, flowering plants first appeared. A few million years later, bees began separating from wasps, and then began to make honey. A fossilized honeycomb dating from around 3 million years ago has been found! We know that humans have been harvesting honey stuff for thousands of years, with an ancient cave painting discovered in Valencia, Spain, depicting a human figure removing honey from a hive. This could date from as far back as 15,000 years ago.

#### 8. BEEKEEPERS ONLY TAKE WHAT'S EXTRA.

A productive bee colony makes two to three times more honey than it needs to survive the winter. When harvesting honey from a beehive, beekeepers try not to take anything the bees will miss.

#### 9. BEES ARE A SURPRISINGLY VERSATILE FOOD SOURCE.

Although we are still put off about using insects themselves as a source of protein, we have no problem eating something that's been regurgitated by them. Bees also provide us with Royal Jelly, beeswax, bee pollen, and other interesting and exotic foods.

#### 15. HONEY VENDORS WENT THROUGH GREAT LENGTHS TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS.

In the Victorian age, some honey vendors started sporting "bee beards" as a way to draw attention to their products! This was

done by holding a caged queen bee beneath your chin and allowing the bees to cluster across your face. Certainly seems a bit drastic, and not something most beekeepers would advise, although many parts of the world continue to hold competitions each year to create the most impressive bee beard.

<https://www.websterhoney.com/shop/>

