



A Beekeeper in Mexico Named *Gaudencio* and the Wonders of His Honey

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My husband and I recently took time for an unusual date: We visited local beekeeper, Señor *Gaudencio*, in a small town called *Nealtican*, about a 20 minute drive from our home here in San Pedro Cholula in Puebla, Mexico.

We wanted to learn some of the methods and secrets of *Gaudencio*'s trade, get personal insight into the benefits of all the properties of honey and of course, purchase some of the pure golden sweetness for ourselves.

Gaudencio greeted us just outside his property, located on the edge of town. His 55-year old eyes twinkled as he shook our hands, obviously pleased that some *gringos* were sincerely interested in his life's passion. Delicate purple flowers of spanish jasmine, periwinkle hydrangeas, traditional magenta bougainvillea and a host of other randomly planted flowers and cacti lined his dirt driveway. His simply constructed concrete white house was on the left, his work yard and buildings to the right. We walked to the right, past the small pond filled with floating plants and koi fish and under the makeshift clothesline where fresh laundry hung. The sound of bees filled the air like soft and busy music. I instinctively darted to avoid them, but *Gaudencio* walked to his shop nonchalantly as if they were his friends and belonged all around him.

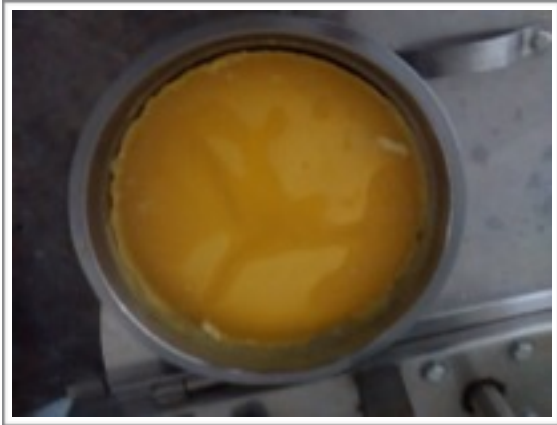
The Wonders of Beeswax

Our gracious host proudly led us to his own recent handmade invention— a solar heater of sorts, constructed of a large metal pan, tilted with a tray at the end and covered with glass. “I spread out all the wax crumbles on this from the honeycombs,” he explained, “the heat of the sun will cause the beeswax to flow down into the pan, while most of the impurities stay on the main tray.” He would later screen the wax for the final product of 99% pure beeswax. Showing me a cake of beeswax made from the mush on the tray, he explained how his bees must eat 6 pounds of honey to produce 1 pound of wax, which is a natural product secreted by the bees to make honeycombs.



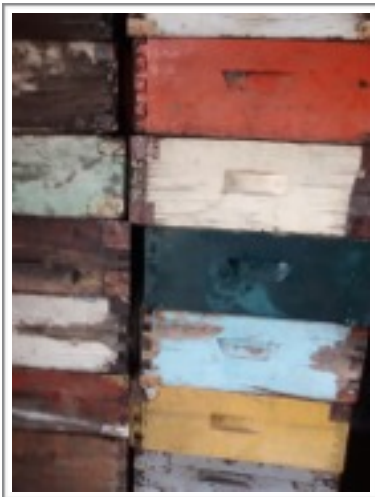
The health and beauty benefits of beeswax are just as incredible as the miraculous process by which it is made:

- A mixture of honey, olive oil and beeswax has been proven to treat skin conditions, among them diaper rash and psoriasis. ¹
- You can make a salve that's effective for poison ivy, poison oak, and other itches. In a small saucepan, simmer 1 tablespoon of chickweed powder, 1 tablespoon of comfrey powder, and 1 pint of organic olive oil for 3 hours. Strain, add 2 ounces of beeswax, and pour into individual tins. ²



- To make an easy beeswax lotion simply combine 1 c. olive oil, 1/2 c. coconut oil and 2 oz. beeswax into a pint sized canning jar. Put this jar into a saucepan and fill the saucepan with water until it comes 3/4 of the way up the canning jar, being careful not to get water into the oil mixture. Put on the stove over medium/low heat. Heat and stir occasionally until melted. Let cool to room temperature. During the cooling process, put a fork into the jar and stir vigorously every 15 minutes or so. Once at room temperature, add in 1/2 t. vitamin E and 20 drops of essential oil.

Handmade Houses for the Hives



Gaudencio waved his hand in the direction of the room behind us which served as his wood shop. This is where he personally constructs and paints the wooden boxes and trays which house his 500 hives. My husband, being a carpenter, noted the dove-tailed corners on the new style boxes and the two men digressed into rapid Spanish of wood shop talk. I walked around and noted the muted colors of the boxes and how the paint was never in the box's interiors. I noted the trays fit perfectly in rows of 10 in each box, like an efficient filing system. "These boxes hold up for 10 years. I never paint the insides as I want no chemical contamination from the paint. I also don't use chemically treated wood; I dry the pieces myself to ensure again that no outside impurities get into my hives."

¹ Al-Waili N. Topical application of natural honey, beeswax and olive oil mixture to treat patients with atopic dermatitis or psoriasis: partially controlled study. *Complement Ther Med* 2003; 11:226–222. DOI: [10.1016/S0965-2299\(03\)00120-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0965-2299(03)00120-1)

² Dr. Edward Group DC, NP, DACBN, DCBCN, DABFM. October 9, 2015. *Eight Uses for Organic Beeswaxes*, globalhealingcenter.com

We learned that the paint color, aside from looking quaint, is an important facet of Gaudencio's setup: the bees identify their particular hive by color, position and unique smell. If any of these are changed and the bees enter the wrong address, the bees at the correct address kill the intruders.

Visiting the Hives

Agreeing to take us to his nearest cluster of hives, the three of us climbed into the cab of his 25-year bruised old white truck. The doors were held together with wire and Gaudencio pumped the gas for a good five minutes before the engine came grudgingly to life.



We drove through the Mexican countryside, past small peasant farms and stone quarries where young men chipped at rock with their pickaxes. “I did that kind of work as a young man,” he reminisced “but it is dangerous. At any moment a rock could fall down and kill you. My brother-in-law died that way. I didn’t want to take that chance, nor did I see a future in it for me as I grew older. I decided to follow in the steps of my father and grandfather and carry on the beekeeping business. I’m happy in my work. I can do this into my old age. Success in your job means that you enjoy it. We’ve had disease and frosts that have killed our bees, but I just

keep coming back to it and it all works out.” Gaudencio drives on cheerfully over the terrible, rocky dirt road, while I try to keep my stomach settled.



A half hour later a clearing of painted hive-boxes seems to appear out of nowhere. We are handed two well-worn half-suits to put on for protection while Gaudencio works on lighting his old tin smoker. This is the way he calms the bees so he can check the trays. He lifts off the first box after gently smoking the bottom entry hole. “This one is not ready to harvest; the bees are still producing the honey. I always let them complete the process. Beekeeping is not a rush job. It is all dependent on the bee’s timing and I need to be respectful of them.”

The bees swarm around him, landing on his bare hands and stinging them multiple times, but he takes no notice. Earlier he told us he gets stung on average about 20 times a day — he is no longer bothered by the stings and has built up such an immunity that there is no evidence of the sting at all. I, however, poke out one finger from my mesh coat to snap a picture and sure enough, that finger gets stung. Ouch! My husband is the recipient of two stings. Thankfully, neither of us have an allergic reaction and within the hour the pain has dissipated.



Organic Honey, Or Not?

“Tell me about the concern of local pesticides and herbicides compromising your honey,” I inquire. I’m aware that local farmers use these products without reserve — they often have no training in their use or the dangers to their health and can be seen, unprotected by suits or masks, spraying these liberally over their crops. Gaudencio explains that none of the 17 locations that his 500 hives sit upon within a two-hour drive are owned by him. He simply asks private citizens if he can put his hives on their land and pays them with a 5

-gallon bucket of honey, yearly. He has no control if they use sprays or if these get on the flowers his bees harvest nectar from. Some of his hives farther away are on the slopes of the local, active volcano Popocatepetl. These are on uncultivated land where cactus blooms and wildflowers provide the raw materials for his bees. These could almost be considered “organic” although there is no way to prove that, but this is the honey he and his family consume because he knows it’s the most natural. “I work to ensure the least amount of contamination in my honey however possible, but I can’t prove anything specific so I don’t advertise that,” he replies. Simple and straight-forward. Fair enough.

Best Honey Season in this Area of Puebla



We learned that the best season for honey production in our area is October-November. During these autumn months, the bees can create their hexagons in one day and take merely 3-4 days to make a full tray of honey. The bees feast on a variety of local wildflowers, with no particular set taste. The color and taste of the honey changes with the season. We noted the taste of the honey produced on the volcano was much richer and darker than that produced near his home.

Honey's Health Benefits: His Family's Testimony



On the drive back after checking on his hives, we discussed the health benefits of his many bee products, all made by himself, his youngest son, and two employees. Used to the savvy consumerism of the United States, I was both surprised and enchanted by his lack of product marketing or vast medical knowledge related to his business. Gaudencio refused to be caught up in any of that hype — his love for his work, his bees, his ability to exercise creativity and provide for his family in order to live a calm and peaceful life was obviously much greater. He's never had a problem selling his honey — he's still got the customers from his father's generation. Buyers

come from downtown Puebla, Mexico City and as far as the state of Morelos. It's not his concern what they do with the honey, he just sells the base products of honey, beeswax, royal jelly, propolis and pollen.

Raw, unfiltered honey from a trusted source is truly a miracle food. The blend of sugar, trace enzymes, minerals, vitamins, and amino acids is quite unlike any other sweetener on earth. And while honey *is* high in fructose, it has many health benefits when used in moderation. Among other things it boosts energy and the immune system, clears skin, provides prebiotics for the gut, relieves allergy symptoms and mixed with lemon, makes an effective cough syrup. Not to mention, it simply tastes delicious!

With every meal, Gaudencio's family eats honey or its products — even on their tacos! They have for three generations. None of them have been sick on a consistent or seasonal basis. His father, now 90 years old, developed a brain tumor 15 years ago. Fortunately, doctors were able to remove it, but warned him that he may have lasting effects related to his speech, vision or nervous system. His father made a full recovery and continues to function in perfect health. Gaudencio shrugs and quips, “We all say it's the honey products that keep our whole family healthy. Nothing complicated that we do — we just take care of our bees and enjoy their fruits.”

The Wonders of Bee Pollen

Gaudencio rightly understands that pollen is an important form of protein and comes in a form that is highly digestible. He has a number of hives on Popocatepetl dedicated solely to the production of pollen. Bee pollen is richer in protein than meat, fish, eggs and cheese. “35 to 50 grams of pollen a day”, writes Dr. Stefan Stangaciu an MD from Romania, “can cover the needs in protein of a man”. The mineral selenium, which is found in bee pollen, slows down the aging of the cells. It's richness in the B Vitamins and in amino acids necessary to the nervous system gives it anti-stress qualities. Thanks to its richness in amino acids, pollen has a positive action on physical and intellectual tiredness.³ These are only a

³*Bee Pollen Extends Lifespan*, Center for New Medicine. <http://cfnmedicine.com/bee-pollen-extends-lifespan/>

handful of the benefits. A quick internet search yields a proven wealth of others. My husband especially appreciates pollen for its ability to desensitize the immune system to the point where he can tolerate local pollens and therefore in a homeopathic way, essentially decrease the symptoms of seasonal allergies.⁴

Angela Ysseldyk, RNCP from beepollenbuzz.com offers the following delicious recipe incorporating bee pollen for a quick breakfast and energy enhancer:

Healthy Blender Drink

- 1 ripe banana
- 2 prunes, cooked and pitted
- 1 TBSP ground flax seeds
- ½ tsp lemon juice
- ½ cup real orange juice
- 1 TBSP pure liquid honey

1 tsp (up to 1 TBSP) pure bee pollen granules

Place all ingredients in blender and blend until creamy and smooth.

Makes about 10 ounces – a light breakfast/meal for one.

You can also add 1 TBSP Peanut Butter or Almond Butter for extra energy.

The Wonders of Royal Jelly



Gaudencio explains that one of the most labor intensive parts of production from his hives is extracting the royal jelly, a substance secreted by honeybee workers and fed by them to larvae that are being raised as potential queen bees. He is not fond of taking food from his potential queen bees, for without them his honey production would come to a halt. He routinely makes sure that there is ample supply for the colonies before harvesting the excess. He sells small 2 oz. glass jars, keeping them refrigerated.

⁴ Stengler, Mark ND, *The Natural Physician's Healing Therapies: Proven Remedies Doctors Don't Know*. (New York, New York: Prentice Hall Press, 2010), p. 55.

Gaudencio laughingly told us his wife makes concoctions for her skin and hair with bee products including the royal jelly, but he did not know how she does it. He seemed to assume everyone knows the wonders of royal jelly, but in case you don't, here are some:⁵

- As reported in the Journal of Agricultural Food Chemistry in 2008, Royal Jelly contains very high amounts of several antioxidants. Scientists learned was that RJ had higher amounts of these antioxidants when the Royal Jelly was fresher and kept cool.
- Boosts and balances immune systems
- Enhances overall brain function
- Helps release toxins from the liver
- Reduces inflammation which is particularly helpful in Alzheimer's, heart-disease or cancer patients
- Helps with wound healing
- Controls diabetes and blood sugar
- Has beneficial effects on osteoporosis and bone loss
- Inhibits the development of breast cancer
- Lowers cholesterol



The Wonders of Propolis

Hippocrates, the Greek widely regarded as the first “modern” physician, was one of the first to recommend this miraculous substance. He said it would heal ulcers of the skin and digestive tracts.⁶ Propolis is the resinous substance that bees gather from the leaf buds of trees. The bee transforms it in order to seal cracks, build panels, as well as using it as a microbiocidal agent, disinfectant and also for embalming intruders. To date, no antioxidant capacity values have been found greater than propolis!⁷

Gaudencio told us that propolis is harvested by scraping it off the frames. He warms the scraped propolis in the sun and pours the liquid into jars. He uses this to make gummies that are popular with kids to boost immunity, as well as propolis honey straws. The taste is strong and a little bit goes a long way. The harvest is not nearly as large as that of honey, but enough to produce product for sale. Propolis is a powerful antibacterial, antiviral and fungicidal, as well as a painkiller and promotes the healing of wounds. I use a propolis tincture putting drops in the back of my throat when I sense a cold coming on; my children prefer the gummies.

⁵ Ysseldyk, Angela. *Benefits of Royal Jelly*. August 1st, 2013. Bee Pollen Buzz. <http://www.bee-pollen-buzz.com/health-benefits-of-royal-jelly.html>

⁶ Stengler, Mark ND, *The Natural Physician's Healing Therapies: Proven Remedies Doctors Don't Know*. (New York, New York: Prentice Hall Press, 2010), p. 380.

⁷ Mercola, Joseph, Dr. *Propolis has Enormous Benefits for Your Health*. November 17, 2009. [mercola.com](http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/11/17/this-bee-product-has-enormous-benefits-for-your-health.aspx): Take Care of Your Health. <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/11/17/this-bee-product-has-enormous-benefits-for-your-health.aspx>

Lessons from the Bees

Moving from the technical and health-based questions, I drew out Gaudencio to tell us what he has learned from his bees, for no doubt a trade like this is not without strong observation and application. “I’ve learned from the bees that it is most important to work for the good of all; in a true community all



have their job and it benefits the rest. An individual bee cannot survive alone, they need the others. I used to tell my kids when they were getting behind in their schooling or complaining, to look at the bees — they are never lazy or self-centered. If we help each other out, so much can be accomplished but alone, we miss out.” His philosophical thoughts rang true with my husband and I.

We walked into the large room that housed his equipment, spare boxes and harvested honey stored in food-grade buckets. Requesting a liter of liquid honey (more moisture) and crystalized honey (less moisture—both, unrefined), we continued to chat while he worked to scoop out our honey. He promised to give us a call when he had a harvest of pollen, royal jelly and propolis ready. He happened to have a disc of beeswax available for purchase, so we also had that bagged up. I’m looking forward to making the lotion described above and even seeing how it fairs with the ancient form of encaustic art.

No doubt, this was one of our more educational and interesting dates. Regardless of some bee stings, the *sweetness* has lasted. If you ever get to Central Mexico, drop me an email and I’d be more than happy to introduce you to a Mexican beekeeper named Gaudencio and the wonders of his honey. - by *Angela Blycker* www.peacefulwomenshealth.com

Angela Blycker is a student at Genesis School of Natural Health. It is our privilege to share this information with her permission - 2016.