A Tribute to Priscilla Coe
April 14, 1949 - October 2, 2016

Medicine from the Hive
an Introduction to Apitherapy

By 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.

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From the Editor

Contact: aasoffice@apitherapy.org
Hello AAS Members,

I never had the pleasure of ever meeting Priscilla Coe since I joined the AAS in 2005, and the more I have read about her in my search to create a tribute to her, I am feeling as though I really missed out in not having known her even just a little bit. She was a truly amazing and interesting individual who contributed to the world on many levels including her work in culinary public relations, being an advocate for organic food and agriculture, a student of holistic healing, a hobbyist beekeeper, and her long time involvement and participation with the American Apitherapy society leaves a space that will be hard to fill. As I perused the archival journals I found many articles that she had written, she certainly had a passion for apitherapy and an amazing talent to put her thoughts in writing to share her knowledge and experiences with others. I especially found it so appropriate to publish her articles about bee gardens being that spring has arrived and that is what we should all be doing. When I lived in Utah we had a beautiful organic garden and I remember it not really being complete until we acquired our beehives. I loved to watch them as they so diligently did their work. One day as I was sitting on my deck, I witnessed my bees swarming, as they blackened the ever so blue sky settling into a couple of branches of an aspen tree near the hives. I sat there in awe the entire time just fascinated with them. I have since moved to California, and being that I live in an apartment, I no longer have the pleasure of having a garden, or the bees. I do look forward to having that again soon, and I will plant a bee friendly garden for my bees; we should all be planting our own little Melissa garden.

Bee Happy,
Marilyn Graham
Hello Everyone,

Happy spring 2017!

I welcome all of you to join us and come and celebrate 100 years of the NCSBA (North Carolina State Beekeepers Association) at their Centennial summer 2017 meeting this July 13-15, 2017 being held at the Embassy Suites Convention Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. There will be many speakers, workshops, vendors, etc., along with a lot of fun and camaraderie. The AAS has been invited to participate, and I will be giving a special Apitherapy presentation in addition to a hands on workshop. We are hoping that many of you will come and participate in this iconic and special event. In the past, the NC beekeepers have been extremely supportive of apitherapy and the AAS, inviting Theo Cherbuliez and I several times down to Charlotte and Raleigh Durham resulting in a huge turnout. They also helped us organize (Fountain Odom Esq., the AAS legal advisor) a very successful 2007 CMACC in Raleigh Durham where Fountain organized a special typical NC barbecue for everyone that was spectacular & delicious!!! For more information and registration: www.ncbeekeepers.org.

For more information and registration: www.ncbeekeepers.org.

I also hope to see some of you at the Essex County Beekeepers Society meeting being held at the Essex County Environmental Center, 621 Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland, NJ 07068 on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 from 700-900 PM. Here I will be giving an Apitherapy presentation including clinical Lyme disease and rheumatoid arthritis patient profiles. Come learn about all the practical considerations of doing bee venom therapy safely to improve your health. This is very close to New York City so I am really hoping to see some AAS members, especially those of you living in the tri-state area! For more information visit: http://www.ecbs.njbeekeepers.org/.

We are in the process of selecting a location/venue for our CMACC 2017 and are specifically looking in the Northeast, US. Possible dates will be from the end of October to the first weekend in December excluding Thanksgiving and will be confirmed once board members agree on a mutually convenient time. I have explored several places in Brooklyn, NY which although great, were exorbitant in price. I am waiting for a quote from the Courtyard Marriott in Jersey City, NJ right across the river from Manhattan. If any of you East Coast members have any ideas regarding an affordable hotel/venue near a major airport, please email the AAS office and we can discuss criteria. Your input and help would be greatly appreciated. Time is of the essence so we can start planning and advertising the event as soon as possible. I have always wanted to have a CMACC in Massachusetts, but again, prices when I checked hotels near Boston were high for the AAS budget. Another option we are considering is to have it in the same location that we had it last October 2016 in Redondo Beach, CA as that venue was perfect in many regards.

I want to remind all of you about the American Apitherapy Society, Inc. Facebook page that is a closed group for members of the AAS and anyone who has attended a past CMACC. It is a safe, private place/forum where you can post, ask questions and share information regarding apitherapy.

Peace, bees & great health,
Frédérique Keller, L.Ac

President of the American Apitherapy Society, Inc.

Upcoming International Apitherapy Events

International Apitherapy Symposium held in Portorož, Slovenia organized by the Slovenian Apitherapy Society  DATES: May 26-28, 2017
https://apitherapysymposium.wordpress.com

APIMONDIA  Istanbul, Turkey  DATES: September 29-October 4, 2017
http://www.apimondia2017.org/
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 its 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 antibacterial, 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 mono-floral 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 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 table spoons 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 renewal and repair, and wound healing. It oxygenates cells, and is an important nervine. Propolis provides a high range of phytonutrients 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 Apimedica 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 was a beekeeper in Sonoma CA. She worked in food public relations in San Francisco and was a long time student of many aspects of holistic healing. She was a frequent contributor to the Journal of the American Apitherapy Society. A recent project was a honeybee sanctuary in Healdsburg California, The Melissa Garden, www.themelissagarden.com.

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Resources
www.apitherapy.org
The American Apitherapy Society; membership organization; Journal; conferences.
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 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, Apimedica2006, www.apimedica2006.gr.
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
National Honey Board
www.apitherapynews.com The bees have a blog!
www.draperbee.com/ beesupplies/videos.htm Draper’s Super Bee Apiaries in Pennslyvania has apitherapy videos for sale and for low cost rental.
www.wholepropolis.com
Whole Propolis—North American and Brazilian green propolis in water solution.

Books
Bee Well Bee Wise, Bernard Jensen, Ph. D., Bernard Jensen Publisher, Escondido, CA, 1994.
Health & The Honeybee by Charles Mraz

A holistic solution to cleaner, healthier air!
- Propolis vaporizers eliminate bacteria, mold and pollution by up to 72%.
- Protects the respiratory system from free radical damage.

Propolis, the natural antibiotic
Now available with mask for inhalation therapy!
Visit our Apitherapy Boutique
www.beehealthyfarms.com
Tel: 1-888-235-8002
“Sanctuary” is a rich word that is a pleasure to contemplate. It implies insulation from a troubling world and, of course, connotes a holy or sacred element to a location. This is precisely what the honeybees need at this unique moment in history. In Apitherapy, we need the healthiest bees possible to produce everything from honey to bee venom for our medicine chest of hive products. Offering the bees ample forage and undisturbed homes in clean environments is not as complicated as it may initially sound. Designating our gardens, large or small, as bee sanctuaries is a minimum gesture of respect for these creatures that weave together the context of nature’s spaces and provide us with some of the most potent healing remedies on earth. Here are some of the basic principles involved.

We first heard the term “colony collapse disorder” (CCD) in 2006. By the time of almond pollination in California in February 2007, the stories of massive bee losses were heartbreaking. Many beekeepers were searching for ways to help the bees. At that time, I was receiving bee venom therapy to improve my circulation. I noticed that within a few hours after having bee stings, I would always have obsessive thoughts about what I could do to help the honeybees. I attributed the thinking to the neurotransmitters in the bee venom and the idea that the bees were summoning me to help them in some way.

In July 2007 I was visiting a beekeeper friend, Barbara Schlimberger, at her ranch in northern California. She asked me what I would really like to do for the bees. I told her I was thinking a lot about creating a bee garden. She was immediately enthusiastic and said, “Let’s do it.” Over the next two months, we refined the bee garden concept to that of a honeybee sanctuary. We hadn’t come across the term “sanctuary” yet, and it actually emerged in a contemplative moment. For several hours one afternoon, I sat with the question of “What is the best thing we can do right now to support the bees?” The answer that came to mind in an absolutely clear way was to create a honeybee sanctuary. A google search showed there were two other people in the United States who were working with this concept, but there were no formulas for what to do so we were off and running on our own.

The initial thinking was largely an antidote to the prevailing dilemmas of CCD. For example, with migratory beekeeping it was clear that honeybees no longer had a home, so we wanted to offer the bees a space that was theirs year round, year after year. Another obvious problem was that honey was removed from the beehives by large commercial operations and the bees were fed sugar syrup or corn syrup to get them through the winters. We decided we would leave adequate honey in each hive for the bees to feed on their own honey throughout the winter. We consulted numerous experts on what to plant for the bees for year-round nectar and pollen sources. Loss of habitat is widely recognized as a contributing factor to CCD. We decided to embrace holistic methods of beekeeping. One example was to shun the use of plastic and readymade foundations and let the bees build their own comb so they could determine optimum cell size. We also decided to try a variety of different hives (other than the Langstroth design) to see if there was one that especially stood out for supporting bee health.

Now, four years later, we have a gloriously vibrant and beautiful garden designed by Kate Frey. We have a website. We offer many tours and classes for the public, send out an email newsletter every two months, and have been featured in numerous articles and documentaries. We have heard from hundreds of people around the world. Many have told us they, too, plan to create honeybee sanctuaries.

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We no longer feel there is one perfect hive design for the bees. We continue to experiment with new designs, including rustic log hives that are used in many developing countries around the world, and thoughtful new designs that are emerging out of today’s organic beekeeping movements, such as in Germany. We have changed some of our practices. We no longer bring in any swarms from the outside; instead, we let our colonies swarm and we then hive those bees. We are observing the results of new practices for example, some apiculturists feel there is “horizontal transfer” of disease when hives are adjacent to each other. Our hives are now placed at least 100 yards apart on the 42 acre ranch. Our holistic beekeeping advisor and instructor, Michael Thiele of Gaia Bees (www.gaiabees.com), is sensitively attuned to these new practices.

At one time, success as a beekeeper might have been measured in terms of quantity of honey harvested, or as a rigorous pass fail enterprise that simply counted how many hives made it through the winter. Today, we are learning that our relationship to the honeybees has more nuance. Many people are starting to attune to the fact that we have coevolved with the honeybees for millennia. Most scientific research continues to pursue the question of What are the honeybees, with unlimited contributions in such areas as conducting mite counts and endless hive management techniques that are highly invasive. A more worthwhile question may be Who are the honeybees? Sharon Callahan of Anaflora (www.anaflora.com) in northern California is an interspecies communicator who has contributed beautifully to this more profound question. She has commented that honey should be regarded as a sacrament, rather than just as a food. She has also written that bees receive the pulse of energy from the Creator and are playing a key role during evolutionary transformation at this time.

Surely, having a sanctuary for honeybees provides more than the intended goal of creating an optimum physical environment to support the health of the bees. It also provides a loving and respectful venue for observing the bees and musing over who they are and what they want us to know now, and for engaging in deep conversations with other bee lovers. At The Melissa Garden, we have also observed many times how visitors are transformed and renewed by even a few hours in the serenity and vitality of the garden. A sanctuary for the bees is also a sanctuary for human beings. It is natural to think of extending this vision to one of a bee sanctuary that includes an apitherapy component.

Think of an organic garden abundant with beautiful plants, including many medicinal plants, providing forage for bees that not only meets their needs but also is transformed by the bees into a tremendously nourishing honey. This same honey could be used to make beebread, the fermented blend of honey and pollen that is known for its superior nutrition. Resins in a clean environment provide bees with the optimum raw materials for making propolis to safeguard the hygiene of their hives. Propolis also provides humans with one of the most anti-toxic remedies available anywhere. Against this backdrop of great beauty, imagine skilled apitherapists helping people with bee venom therapy. Creating hundreds or thousands of bee-centered healing centers like this around the world is easily within our reach, providing a foundation of green medicine. These centers would venerate the bees for their incomparable capacities to support human health.

Priscilla Coe lived in Sonoma, CA. She worked in food public relations for many years and helped to publicize AAS conferences and other apitherapy and bee events. This article was first published in the JAAS Jul-Sep 2011 issue, Vol. 18, No. 3.
In the fall of 2004, an email on the international Apitherapy List (http://apitherapy.com/api-groups/) mentioned an apitherapy resort in Poland, Apiherba¹, which is situated on several acres and offers accommodations in a restored palace. Apiherba is run by Dr. Edward Kaluzmy, who offers bee venom and apiphytotherapy treatments, that is, he uses remedies made from a combination of hive and botanical products. A forthcoming article in the journal will look at Apiherba and similar bee-centric healing centers. The following article presents my own experience and inspirations as I have considered elements of an archetypal apitherapy bee garden.

What is a bee garden?
Numerous early references to bee gardens indicate that they were places planted with the intention of keeping bees. Current interest in habitat gardening provides substantial information on what to plant to attract honeybees. However, a therapeutic bee garden has considerably more definition.

What is a therapeutic bee garden?
Many gardens are inherently healing sanctuaries. Whether a retreat center, a clinic, or simply a declaration that one’s own backyard is now and apitherapy bee garden, the ambience and healing modalities are as varied as the people involved. Within this range of possibilities, the common denominator is a special attitude toward bees that respects their unique role as healers and offers a willingness to provide an environment that is bee-centric. I began beekeeping several years ago, not to produce honey but to give honeybees as natural a life as possible. For years I had been reading about the stresses on bees, and beekeeping was a small contribution for me to make. The first project was to replant my biodynamic garden with bees in mind. As I have a professional background in food, I happily took on the task of plant selections thinking in terms of “bee gastronomy.” Fortunately, I live in an area that is abundant with old fruit trees, citrus, and eucalyptus and where mustard and almond trees start booming in February. In hindsight, now that I am deeply interested in apitherapy, I realize that this reverence for the honeybee coupled with intelligent planting form the foundation of a therapeutic bee garden. When I learned about Apiherba, I immediately declared my garden an apitherapy bee garden, adding new levels of veneration and learning to my relationship with bees.

What constitutes a healthy garden?
If the soil is healthy and the plants are healthy, the bees will be foraging on the most nutritious nectar and pollen possible. This obviously affects the quality of honey, the well-being of the hive, and the integrity and potency of bee venom. Early on in my gardening, I asked a senior biodynamic farmer how he assessed the health of a farm or garden. He said he noted whether the plants were relaxed yet erect, indication strength; he sniffed to detect little puffs of fragrance that varied as he walked through the garden; and he knew that the amount of buzzing and activity in the air was a hallmark of ecological health. Organic methods are the only choice for producing such vitality.

What do we plant for honeybees?
To help us select plants, there are many online resources, particularly for universities, as well as books. Dr. Stefan Stangaciu of Romania has provided an excellent list of bee plants on www.apitherapy.com.
A future issue of this journal will report on his “bee paradise,” which he planted in 2005 and is developing as an outpatient apitherapy clinic. We need to strive for year-round nectar and pollen sources for bees, as soil and climate permit. When there is enough acreage to segregate hives, crops may be planted to obtain specific honeys that treat specific diseases. In smaller gardens, diversity is the essential element. My own preference is for heirlooms—bulbs, roses, vegetables, flowers, herbs, fruit trees—for their genetic integrity and because they are more interesting.

**What do bees like?**
Modern hive management aimed at commercial honey production gives us plenty of examples of what bees don’t like. In a garden intended for apitherapy where bees are to receive the utmost respect, certain practices do not fit. Some examples: The use of plastic foundation and chemicals, and clipping the wings of queens. How can we knowingly stress hives that are the source of our medicine? There is no better indication of what bees do like than the rhythmic, contented buzz of a happy hive whose needs are met. I consider this welcome sound a form of apitherapy.

**How do we raise our consciousness about honeybees?**
Several writers invoke awe for the honeybee that cannot help but have an effect on apiary management. Maurice Maeterlinck, a Nobel Prize-winning literary figure of the turn of the 20th century, wielded tender observations with poetic images in his exquisite depiction of the hive. Images of “sacred chambers” of “royal nymphs asleep in their capsules” etch themselves on our souls. Rudolf Steiner, an early 20th-century scientist, philosopher, and educator, writes about honeybees from a broad historical perspective and within a vast cosmological context. Steiner notes that the creation of the six-sided honeycomb embodies the same formative architectural forces that have created quartz crystals since the start of evolution. He speaks of honeybees as agents of formic acid processes in humans and the environment, an underpinning of all life that is little understood and largely overlooked. As honeybees’ caretakers, we need to apply our intelligence and imagination to amplifying all that contributes to their health, which will ultimately contribute to our own health and that of our environment. Steiner has written about the unique transactions between plants and honeybees that change the atmosphere in a garden where bees reactive, something more palpable than visible. Russian apitherapist Naum Loyrish writes that Professor N. Kholodny believed that the “volatile organic substances discharged into the air by many plants are atmospheric vitamins.” In time, research may identify the qualitative difference that our senses just begin to perceive in such a fully alive garden.

**What is a vision for the future?**
Honeybees have rewarded us consistently, not only with their mysterious willingness to cooperate with us but also with their generous healing gifts. Now they are under increasing stress. And so just as we need honeybees to be our allies in health, they need for us to establish sanctuaries for them away from modern stressors. As apitherapy becomes more necessary and widespread in the United States, I like to think that therapeutic bee gardens and clinics will start to appear. To arrive at what might be possible, we should think big and think in terms of “bee utopias.” More than 30 years ago Naum Loyrish put forth his idea of utopian “beetowns” where senior citizens would live meaningful and healthy lives, tending hives and making medicines from hive products. My own vision of a bee utopia is of a center where people can retreat from today’s technological buzz and restore themselves with the biological buzz of bees. It would be ecological in design and extremely beautiful, it would nourish the senses with the arts, and it would have apitherapy and botanical medicine at its core. Imagining these bee utopias is a first step in creating therapeutic sanctuaries that can benefit both us and our dear honeybees.
The Honeybee and the Image of the Tree

Understanding the Honey Bee by C.T.G. Baker Bio-Dynamic agricultural association, 1948

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.
Desde hace tiempo se evalúan diversos componentes del propóleo, sustancia resinosas elaborada por las abejas a la que le adjudican múltiples beneficios para la salud por sus compuestos orgánicos potentes, como el ácido cafeico –uno de los principales fenoles naturales–, al que se le atribuye la prevención de alguna etapa en el proceso cancerígeno. Según un comunicado de prensa, Sandra Díaz Barriga, académica de la Facultad de Estudios Superiores (FES) Cuautitlán de la UNAM, y sus colaboradores, se enfocan al estudio antigenotóxico de moléculas derivadas del éster fenetílico del ácido cafeico (CAPE, por sus siglas en inglés), principio activo importante del propóleo, que ha mostrado actividad antitumoral en modelos animales. Derivado de ello, los universitarios encontraron que las aminas fenetílicas del ácido cafeico (CAPA por sus siglas en inglés) también mostraron actividad biológica con potencial antitumoral. Díaz Barriga explicó que esos compuestos son análogos del CAPE, sustancias sintetizadas por el grupo de Enrique Ángeles Anguiano, del Laboratorio de Química Medicinal, también de la FES Cuautitlán, y que en colaboración con Saúl Villa Treviño, del Cinvestav Zacatenco, las evalúan como posibles sustancias quimioprotectoras que pueden contribuir a prevenir el cáncer en hígado. “De hecho existen estudios in vitro e in vivo en modelos animales, aunque también hay en humanos, realizados con los análogos del CAPE para algunos tipos de cáncer en particular”, añadió.

Los fenoles, como el ácido cafeico y sus derivados tipo éster, son compuestos con diversos efectos a nivel biológico, entre los que destaca su capacidad antioxidante. La académica mencionó que un parteaguas en este trabajo fue encontrar que no sólo los ésteres, sino las CAPA, también presentan actividad biológica antineoplásica. “Lo que algunos investigadores observaron fue que estas moléculas tenían la particularidad de ser un poco más estables en el suero de los organismos (modelo animal o líneas celulares), así como efectos positivos en la inhibición tumoral”. Enrique Ángeles y su grupo sintetizaron varias aminas fenetílicas del ácido cafeico con diversos sustituyentes, por ejemplo, grupos metil o etil, fenoles y halógenos. Posteriormente, realizaron estudios de seguridad de estos compuestos, pues como norma internacional deben hacerse las pruebas correspondientes para comprobar su inocuidad en los organismos. La universitaria refirió que su participación en este proyecto consistió en aplicar las pruebas de toxicidad aguda y subcrónica en roedores, además de los análisis de actividad antigenotóxica, que fueron abordados con pruebas in vivo e in vitro, mediante los ensayos de micronúcleos y electroforesis unicelular en gel.

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“Por lo general, abordo mis investigaciones con pruebas de toxicidad aguda o determinación de la DL50 (dosis letal 50), así como la observación de posibles efectos y daños que en diversos órganos y tejidos pudiera producir alguna nueva sustancia. En roedores se evalúan los cambios fisiológicos y morfológicos de éstos o de daño genético en células cuando se tratan líneas celulares (trabajo in vitro)”. 

la realización de los estudios a esos compuestos se contó con apoyo del PAPIIT IT 202512 “Estudio antigenotóxico, antiproliferativo e inhibidor de lesiones precancerosas de un grupo de análogos del éster fenetílico del ácido cafeico desarrollados en la FES Cuautitlán”, detalló Díaz Barriga, responsable del proyecto. Otra parte de la investigación consistió en desarrollar un modelo de lesiones preneoplásicas en colon de ratones y posteriormente administrar los compuestos CAPA; los resultados preliminares han puesto de manifiesto que, por lo menos, esos compuestos, con ciertas diferencias cada uno de ellos, muestran seguridad adecuada; no se han observado daños en el material genético y se han disminuido las lesiones preneoplásicas inducidas en colon. “Los estudios in vitro, donde nuestros compuestos CAPA son retados contra sustancias de reconocido efecto mutagénico, han demostrado un efecto antimitagénico favorable.

Los resultados nos llevan a pensar en las aplicaciones que estas sustancias podrían tener”. Por citar un ejemplo, si en los grandes invernaderos, donde los agricultores aplican sustancias químicas –en su mayoría genotóxicas– para el control de plagas y malezas, el personal recibiera este tipo de compuestos antes o después de estar expuestos, se podría contribuir a contrarrestar los daños mutagénicos provocados por los insecticidas. La reparación del material genético es un hecho biológico, pero tiene un umbral, y si éste se rebasa por la dosis o tiempo de exposición al mutágeno, los sistemas naturales del cuerpo no podrían contrarrestarlo, por lo que el desarrollo de sustancias que realicen una acción quimioprotectora es una tarea muy importante, concluyó.

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