

Honey is the nectar of flowers modified in the body of the bee and concentrated by evaporation in the hive. Chemically it is essentially a concentrated solution of two kinds of sugar, dextrose and levulose, present in approximately equal proportions with small quantities of odorous substances which give to the honey its flavour. The presence in honey of a diastatic ferment and traces of a protein secreted by the bees has lately been demonstrated. Honey has a high nutritive value since dextrose and levulose are immediately absorbed into the circulation and perform in the animal economy the useful and valuable function of heat and energy production.

Canada abounds in nectar-producing flowers, and honey is already an important food-product of the country. The quality of Canadian honey is unsurpassed.

In commerce, honey is divided according to colour into white honey and dark honey. A grade between the two, known as "amber honey," is often recognized. These colour distinctions, however, are for convenience only. The correct way to classify honey is by the plants from which it is gathered, each of which imparts to the honey a distinct colour and flavour. Generally speaking, light-coloured varieties of honey are mild flavoured and the dark are strong flavoured. The light-coloured, mild-flavoured honeys are sold at a higher price than the dark-coloured, strong-flavoured kinds, but tastes vary and some people prefer strong-flavoured honey. The impression that dark honey is necessarily of inferior quality is erroneous.

Most of the white honey produced and sold in Canada is clover honey gathered from alsike and Dutch clover. Commercial clover honey in its fresh liquid condition has a light straw tint, and it granulates in a few weeks to a creamy white. Clover honey has a delicate flavour of which one does not tire, and it is regarded by judges as the standard of fine honey. Basswood honey is another fine white variety that granulates quickly; it has a stronger flavour than clover honey. The cutting down of many basswood trees has made this honey less plentiful in recent years than formerly.

A third kind of white honey that deserves attention is that produced by the willow herb or fire-weed, a tall plant, with showy purple flowers, common in forest clearings. Pure willow-herb honey from Eastern Canada is nearly water-white, and, like clover and basswood honey, granulates almost as hard as lard. The flavour of willow-herb honey is very mild.

The principal dark honey comes from buckwheat. Buckwheat honey is deep purplish brown, and its pronounced aroma and flavour recall somewhat the famous heather honey of Scotland. Some people consider the flavour of buckwheat honey to be too strong, but it makes an excellent blend with other honeys with which indeed the Canadian product is generally mixed by the bees.

The colour and flavour of most samples of honey, except some of the clover honey gathered in the principal clover honey producing regions, are affected more or less by honey gathered from a variety of melliferous flowers occurring in swamps, woodlands, pastures, orchards and prairies, such as goldenrods, asters, dandelion, fruit bloom, milkweed, sweet clover, viper's bugloss and mints of different kinds. Nearly all of these honeys have pleasant aromatic flavours, which add character to the honey, and improve it in the estimation of many of those whose preferences have not already been formed. One or two kinds, however, have a resinous or turpentine-like taste. On the prairie the honey comes principally from wild flowers. So far as is known, no unwholesome or poisonous honey is produced anywhere in Canada.

Nearly all the honey that is seen in stores in Canadian cities is produced in Canada. The usual packages are: extracted honey in glasses containing about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. and 1 lb. and in tins holding $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., 5 lbs. and 10 lbs., and comb-honey in sections weighing 12 ozs. to 16 ozs. Which of these packages is it advisable to buy? The majority of consumers want the best article at the lowest price. They should have no hesitation in buying honey in tins, for in these containers the honey is perfectly well preserved, and it costs about half as much as it does in 1 lb. glass jars or in sections. However, comb-honey is a fancy article of especial charm to many people and when in good condition is a treat well worth the extra cost.