

The wide range of stingless bee honey products created using value-addition methods helps increase demand for stingless bee honey. This provides an added advantage to beekeepers as their honey will continue to have market access.



Pure and Infused honey at ICIPE. Source: Nelly Ndung'u



STINGLESS BEE HONEY VALUE ADDITION



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Stingless bees are types of bees that are different from the common honey bees. They belong to many different species and may be endemic in some places. They are much smaller in size compared to honey bees. However, their size is also varied across the different species. They do not sting, rather, they can bite. They usually defend themselves mainly by being a nuisance to the intruder.

Stingless bee honey is also referred to as pot honey. This honey and its products are in high demand, but the supply is insufficient. This is because the stingless bees produce much smaller quantities of honey compared to the honey bees. The quality of their honey varies with the species, which helps to develop niche markets.

Honey, whether of stingless bees or honey bees, is a plant product. Its quality and nutritive value therefore depends on the forages where bees collect nectar. Stingless bees collect nectar from high density of plants compared to honey bees.

The following products can be sold from stingless bee honey:

Crude stingless bee honey

This contains some particles such as honey pot particles, bee legs or body parts etc as it is not refined. This is the most common honey sold by beekeepers

Pure stingless bee honey

This is the honey that goes through refining, such as sieving, to remove impurities. Beekeepers can improve the value of their honey by carrying out these value-addition activities and therefore sell pure honey.

Creamed Honey

Creamed honey is a type of honey that has been processed to control crystallization, resulting in a smooth and creamy texture. Value-added creamed stingless bee honey can be marketed as a gourmet product and is often preferred for its spreadability and ease of use.

Infused stingless bee honey

These are stingless bee honey products that are infused with other natural products especially herbs, fruits and spices to improve on their nutritive or medicinal value. For example, there are ginger stingless bee honey, chilli stingless bee honey and cinnamon stingless bee honey.

Honey-based Skincare Products

Stingless bee honey is known for its potential skincare benefits, due to its antibacterial and moisturizing properties. Value-added honey skincare products include; honey-based soaps, creams, lotions, and masks, which are marketed for their natural and nourishing qualities.

Honey-based Beverages

Stingless bee honey can be used as a natural sweetener in a variety of beverages such as herbal teas, energy drinks, or flavoured water. Value-added honey beverages may also incorporate additional ingredients like fruit juices, botanical extracts, or functional additives for enhanced taste and health benefits. The honey can also be fermented to make wine.

Solid-based stingless bee honey products

Stingless bee honey can be used for baking cakes and dressing various meals.

Gift Sets and Packaging

Value-added stingless bee honey products can be packaged in aesthetically pleasing containers, gift sets, or artisanal packaging to attract consumers looking for premium honey products for personal use or gifting purposes.

Certifications and Labelling

Value can also be added through certifications such as organic, fair trade, or non-GMO, as well as through transparent labelling that highlights the honey's quality, origin, and production methods. This is appealing to consumers interested in ethical and sustainable products.

Importance of value addition

By adding value to stingless bee honey products through these methods, producers can differentiate their offerings in the market, cater to specific consumer preferences, and potentially command higher prices, thereby enhancing the overall profitability and marketability of their honey products.

