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THE HONEY BEE : EXTRAORDINARY HERBAL PHARMACIST

JAMES FEARNLEY

Apiceutical Research Centre, UK

Discoveries over the last ten years have led to a deepening understanding of the medicinal properties products derived from the beehive: honey, royal jelly, pollen, wax, bee venom and propolis. Propolis has received a huge amount of academic attention over the last 10 years in particular as a natural antibiotic capable of dealing with MRSA. Propolis is produced when honey bees collect resin, from local trees and plants. They process and add wax to it in the hive and use it as the external immune defence system for the superorganism which is the honey bee colony. Discoveries made by members of the Apiceutical Research Centre have shown that the specific biological function of the propolis is related to the environmental challenges faced by the bee. So propolis in areas where bacteria are more of a challenge (in areas of extreme humidity and heat). ARC research has also shown that in areas where sleeping sickness is present the propolis contains an antitrypanosome chemical. The Beehive is a flying pharmacy collecting the defence mechanism of the surrounding plants and elevating that chemical composition into one adapted for its own superorganism. The similarity of the ' body' temperature in the beehive and that of human beings points towards the age old recognition of propolis as a powerful natural medicine. This presentation will explore the vitally important evolution of research into this new genre of medicine : Apiceuticals.

James.fearnley@beearc.com