

Raising bees a family affair for Lavender

● Continued from page 20

bees' necks.

This changes the entire composition of the bee as she develops. Her abdomen is much larger than the average female.

When she hatches and matures, the queen bee takes one flight out of the hive to mate with an average of 12 to 15 drones. Each have their genitals ripped from their bodies and kept inside the queen. They then fall to the ground and die.

This is enough material to fertilize her eggs for a lifetime, so she returns to the hive and sets out to work.

Bees fascinate Ray Lavender, and for good reason.

He remembers watching his parents raise bees on their farm in Edmonton and having to start entirely fresh each year because the frigid Alberta winters would kill off the colonies.

His apiary, on the bor-



Above, Ray Lavender inspects the bees in his brood box, where a new hive of bees are building up their colony. Right, bees working on comb within the frames



Alexandra Heck/Metroland

der of Erin and Acton, fares much better in milder Ontario winters, but beekeeping is challenging across the globe.

Two studies in 2017 found direct links between declining bee populations and the use of neonics. A

study by Nadejda Tsvetkov in partnership with colleagues at York University found bees in corn-farming areas in the province are being exposed to neonics nearly the entire growing season.

"The neonics are just

too devastating to the bees," said Lavender, explaining that the pesticides are used on crops but also spill off trucks and poison bees from ditches. "The worst one, we feel, is rain running into groundwater."

Lavender says he's lucky that there are not any farmers using neonics within the five-kilometer radius around his property where his bees forage for nectar.

In 2015, the Liberal government banned 80 per

cent of neonics in Ontario, which Lavender says gives hope for both beekeepers and for wild populations in the province.

"Hopefully we're coming out of it and the public's interest will not wane," said Lavender.

CUSTOM DESIGNS BY

Kabinet Pro

From Modern to
Contemporary to Traditional.
Product & Design That
Complement Your Life.

**348 Guelph Street,
Georgetown**

(Behind YoYo's, next to Cooper Standard)

www.kabinetpro.com

905-702-7719

Authorized Dealer for

AEG Porter & Charles **smeg**
technology with style

CABICO

MIRALIS
THE ART OF THE KITCHEN

