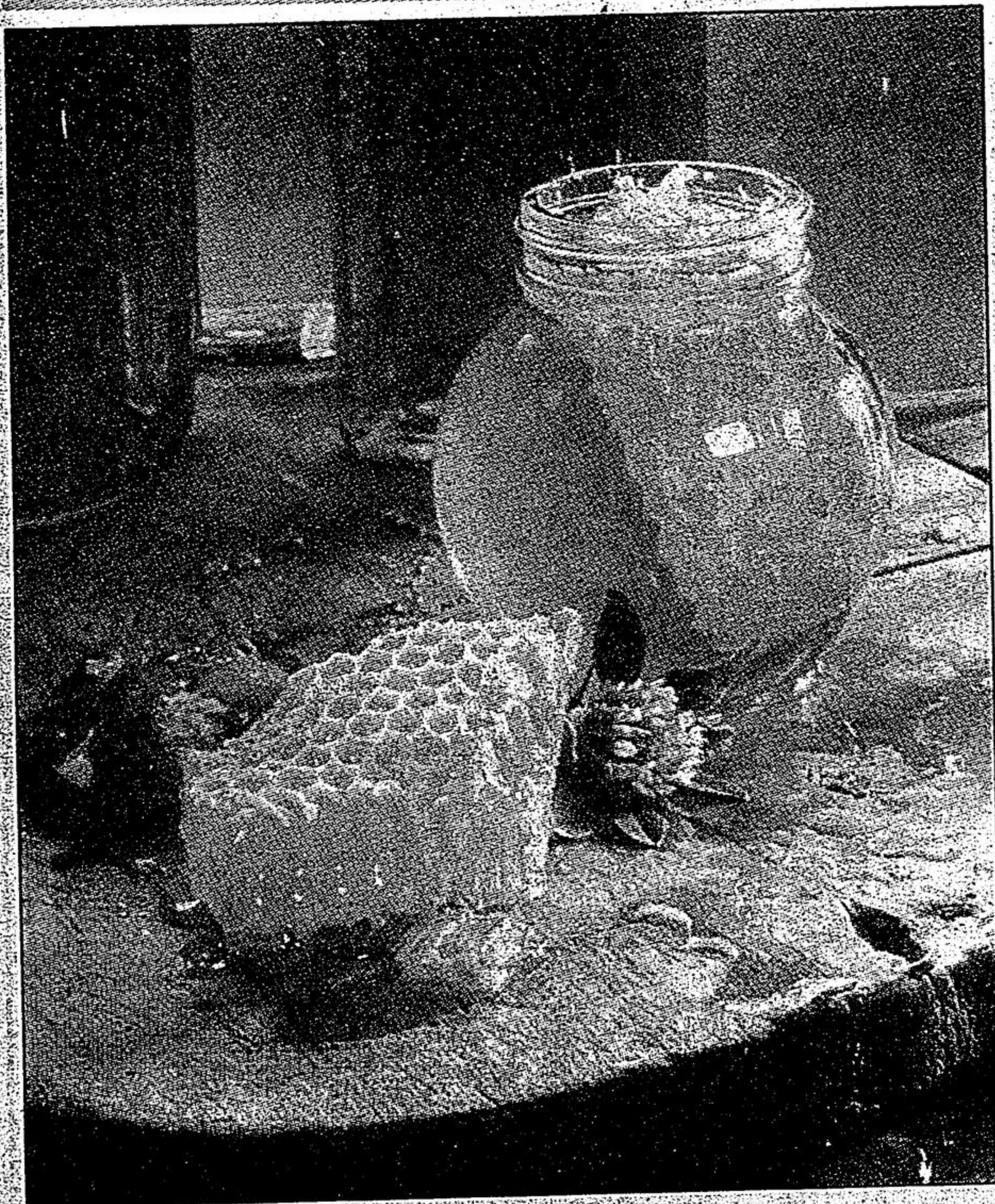


Food & Drink

How sweet it is; October's Honey Month



LIQUID GOLD: Honey and honey products are sweet treats to savour any time of the year, but especially during October — proclaimed Honey Month in Ontario. Honey is a versatile product to use as is at the table or in baking. It keeps food moist and fresh longer, and honey is sweeter than sugar so you can use less of it to get the same sweetening power. One caution; it should not be fed to infants under one year.

CAROLINE DEWAR
Correspondent

Behold the busy bee, zipping from flower to flower on an idyllic summer day. A nuisance? Now imagine the two million flowers that must be visited to make one pound of honey. Impressive? You bet!

Even more impressive is this year's crop of Ontario honey, available now from your local beekeeper.

October is Honey Month in Ontario and there is no better time than this to visit your local beekeeper to sample this year's crop.

Classic Ontario honey is light in colour and mild in flavour, made from the flowers of clover and canola grown right here in Ontario's pasturelands.

For those with a taste for something a little different, however, consider the bold, lingering flavour of dark and aromatic buckwheat honey, or the slightly spicy flavour of purple loosestrife honey.

The value of the bee goes well beyond that jar of honey on your kitchen table. Ontario farmers and gardeners count on bees to pollinate millions of dollars worth of crops.

Many beekeepers lease their hives to local farmers each spring so the bees can pollinate the orchards and

field crops.

This pollination translates into 35 per cent of the food on our plate being due to the work of the busy bee! And don't forget there are many other products available from your local beekeeper including honeycomb, beeswax, pollen and royal jelly.

Our bodies easily absorb the simple sugars in honey, and therefore it makes a wonderful source of quick energy.

Honey contains about 130 calories per 30 ml (2 Tbsp.), a little more than sugar; however, because you need less honey for the same sweetening power, it actually imparts fewer total calories than refined sugar.

Honey can be used as a sweetener in tea and coffee and in a wide range of baked goods such as bread, muffins and cakes.

In addition, honey is a "humectant" — it attracts moisture and thus keeps baked goods fresher longer.

And so the moral of the story is be nice to the bee — he/she contributes greatly and deliciously to our gardens, our crops and our tables.

In Markham, local beekeepers to contact include: Norman Beange at 887-

9355; Graham Carmichael at 477-4515; J. Guy Farintosh at 887-5594; and Gary A.B. Peterson at 294-7163.

Stouffville-area, beekeepers include: Steve Gerencer at 294-2950; Dymtro Haluszka at 642-1584; Anton Hegenauer at 640-3301; Joe Melber at 642-4773; Paul & Henry Nauta at 640-1564; Antonio Pescador at 642-4823; and Glen Ward at 640-3746.

In Uxbridge you can call Bryan Shanks at 852-6494.

Cucumbers are low in fat high in vitamins



Food for Thought

Lisa Cartwright

The season to enjoy fresh greenhouse cucumbers is slowly coming to a close.

The vegetable which is low in calories and a good source of Vitamin C, has a growing season from February to November.

Purchasing:

When looking for the perfect cucumber, consumers should choose one that is long, thin, firm and heavy for its size.

English or seedless cucumbers come individually wrapped in plastic to protect their vivid green exterior.

When storing, cucumbers should be wrapped in plastic at a cool room temperature or in a refrigerator crisper.

Consumers who purchase Canadian-grown cucumbers don't have to worry about pesticide use because most greenhouses use beneficial insects instead of pesticides, said a fact sheet from Foodland Ontario.

"The concept is simple: good bugs eat bad bugs. Strips of sticky paper are set out to catch and count the pests and predators are released accordingly," it said.

Eating:

Without peeling (most of the nutrients are found within the skin) or seeding the cucumbers, consumers can eat the vegetable raw, either by themselves or in a salad or sandwich, or they can be steeped in butter, stock, cream (or my childhood favourite — a bowl of vinegar).

Cucumbers can also be cut lengthways, poached and filled with a mixture of rice and herbs, suggested the Foodland Ontario fact sheet.

HONEY CARAMEL CORN

Great for lunch box or Halloween treats. Caution: Addictive!

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) Ontario Honey
- dash salt

- 1 tsp (5 mL) grated orange peel
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) baking soda
- 3 qts. (3.5 L) popped popcorn

Melt butter in large saucepan, stir in sugar, honey and salt. Cook and stir until mixture comes to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; boil without stirring about 3 minutes to 265 degrees F.

Remove from heat; stir in orange peel and soda.

Place popcorn in large, oven-proof bowl; slowly pour syrup over popcorn while stirring. Turn onto greased baking tray.

Bake at 250 degrees F. 45 minutes; stir every 15 minutes. Cool.

Break into serving-sized pieces. Store in airtight container.

Makes 3 quarts. Preparation time: About one hour.

HONEY MUSTARD MAYONNAISE

Quick, versatile and delicious!

- 1/4 cup (50 mL) mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) Ontario Honey

- 2 tbsp (25 mL) Dijon-style mustard
- 1 tsp (5 mL) prepared horseradish

Combine all ingredients, mix thoroughly.

Makes 1 cup.

Preparation Time: Less than 15 minutes.

Serving Tip: Serve as a dip for fresh vegetables, spread on sandwiches with meat filling or heat slightly and spoon over cooked vegetables.

SPICEY HONEY PEANUT SAUCE

An easy recipe that gets rave reviews!

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) Ontario Honey
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) peanut butter
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) soy sauce
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped fresh coriander
- 1/8 tsp (.5 mL) crushed red peppers

Combine all ingredients; mix well. Makes about 3/4 cup.

Preparation Time: Less than 15 minutes

Serving Tip: Serve with poultry, pork or vegetables

CRISPY PEANUT BUTTER BARS

(Recipe courtesy of Robin Hood)

This recipe boasts an easy, no-bake

RECIPES

method and is perfect for lunch boxes or after school treat.

- 2 1/2 cups (625 mL) crisp rice cereal
- 1 1/4 cups (300 mL) oats
- 1 cup (250 mL) chopped mixed dried fruit (apricots, raisins, apples, cranberries) *
- 1 cup (250 mL) chopped peanuts or pecans
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) packed brown sugar
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) peanut butter
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) Ontario Honey
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) cocoa

*or replace dried fruit with 1 cup mini marshmallows

Combine first four ingredients in a large bowl. Heat brown sugar, peanut butter and honey together over low heat until melted. Stir in cocoa. Pour over dry ingredients. Mix well.

Press into 9" x 13" pan, lined with greased foil. Chill until set. Remove from pan. Peel off foil and cut into bars.

Store in airtight container. Makes about 36 bars.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Chilling Time: 1 hour